



Monitoring government policies

A toolkit for civil society organisations
in Africa

Preface



About the commissioning agencies

CAFOD is the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development, the official international development and relief agency of the Catholic Church in England and Wales. It is a member of the worldwide Caritas Internationalis federation.

Together with local partner organisations in more than 50 countries, CAFOD works to build a better world for people living in poverty. In emergency situations, CAFOD also provides immediate relief and stays on to help people rebuild their lives.

CAFOD and its partners put pressure on governments and institutions to tackle the causes of poverty. In UK schools and parishes, CAFOD raises awareness of these issues and encourages people to campaign and fundraise.

www.cafod.org.uk



Working through local partner organisations in around 50 of the world's poorest countries, Christian Aid helps people, regardless of religion, ethnicity or nationality, to improve their own lives and tackle the causes of poverty and injustice. We combine this with advocacy and popular campaigning to challenge the policies of the UK and Irish governments, the European Union and international institutions which favour the rich over the poor and marginalised.

www.christianaid.org.uk



Trócaire is the official overseas development agency of the Catholic Church in Ireland. It supports long-term development projects overseas and provides relief during emergencies. It also informs the Irish public about the root causes of poverty and injustice and mobilises the public to bring about global change.

www.trocaire.org

About the toolkit project

This project was started by the three agencies with a view to supporting partner organisations, particularly church-based organisations, to hold their governments to account for the consequences of their policies. This toolkit specifically targets African partners, seeking to share the struggles and successes of partners already monitoring government policies with those that are new to this work.

The development of this toolkit has been an in-depth process. Two consultants were commissioned to research and write the toolkit. They were supported by a reference group composed of members of staff and partner organisations from CAFOD, Christian Aid and Trócaire with experience in policy monitoring. The draft toolkit was piloted with partners in workshops in Malawi, Sierra Leone and Ethiopia. Comments from the reference group and the workshops contributed to this final version of the toolkit.

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CAFOD, Christian Aid and Trócaire

Acronyms

ABP	Africa Budget Project
CAFOD	Catholic Agency for Overseas Development
CBU	Children's Budget Unit
CBO	Community-based organisation
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	Civil society organisation
CSCOBE	Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education (in Malawi)
CSPR	Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (in Zambia)
EIA	Environment Impact Assessment
EU	European Union
FBO	Faith-based organisation
GBI	Gender Budget Initiative
HIPC	Highly-indebted poor country
IBP	International Budget Project
IDASA	Institute for Democracy in South Africa
IFI	International financial institution
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISODEC	Integrated Social Development Centre (in Ghana)
JCTR	Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (in Zambia)
MEJN	Malawi Economic Justice Network
MP	Member of parliament
MTEF	Medium-term expenditure framework
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NMJD	Network Movement for Justice and Development (in Sierra Leone)
PETS	Public expenditure Tracking Surveys
PRSP	Poverty reduction strategy paper
SEND	Social Enterprise Development Foundation
SMART	Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound
TGNP	Tanzania Gender Networking Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UDN	Uganda Debt Network
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VCT	Voluntary counselling and testing

INTRODUCTION

Imagine this: a world where citizens help to decide what their governments do to combat poverty. Where citizens keep an active eye on governments' progress and check whether policies are making a difference. Where people regularly give feedback to their governments on the services they are providing – and the feedback is taken seriously. Where, if a policy isn't working as it should, it is scrapped and replaced with something better. Imagine this: a world where informed dialogue between governments and citizens leads to more effective, fair and inclusive policies from which everyone benefits.

This toolkit is inspired by the vision above. It explores ways of working for change by monitoring government policies. It aims to help foster a conversation in society on the policies we choose and how well they work. How this dialogue unfolds will differ from country to country. The aim of the toolkit is to offer you information, ideas, examples and methods on how to gather evidence about policies *where you are* – and to use that evidence to press for change. On the following pages, you are invited to develop your own approach by selecting and customising the tools you find most appropriate for your circumstances.

What is a toolkit?

A toolkit is not a textbook or instruction manual. It doesn't contain everything you need to know about policy monitoring. The best way to understand the purpose of a toolkit is to think about a real box of tools. When you first open it, you may look through the whole box to find out what is inside. But after that, you seldom need all the tools at once: you use them as you need them. You might use the saw and hammer very often when you are building a house. For another task, you need the screwdriver and pliers. Some tools in your box may never come in handy. In the same way, this toolkit is intended to give you options. It invites you to select and combine elements that suit your own work, in your own context.

Why this toolkit?

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide an introduction to policy monitoring as a way of making a difference in our societies. The aims of this resource are to:

- give you a clear overview of what policy monitoring is
- learn from the experiences of others in Africa
- introduce you to key terms and methods that are used in policy monitoring
- offer ideas on how your organisation or network could plan activities to monitor policies.

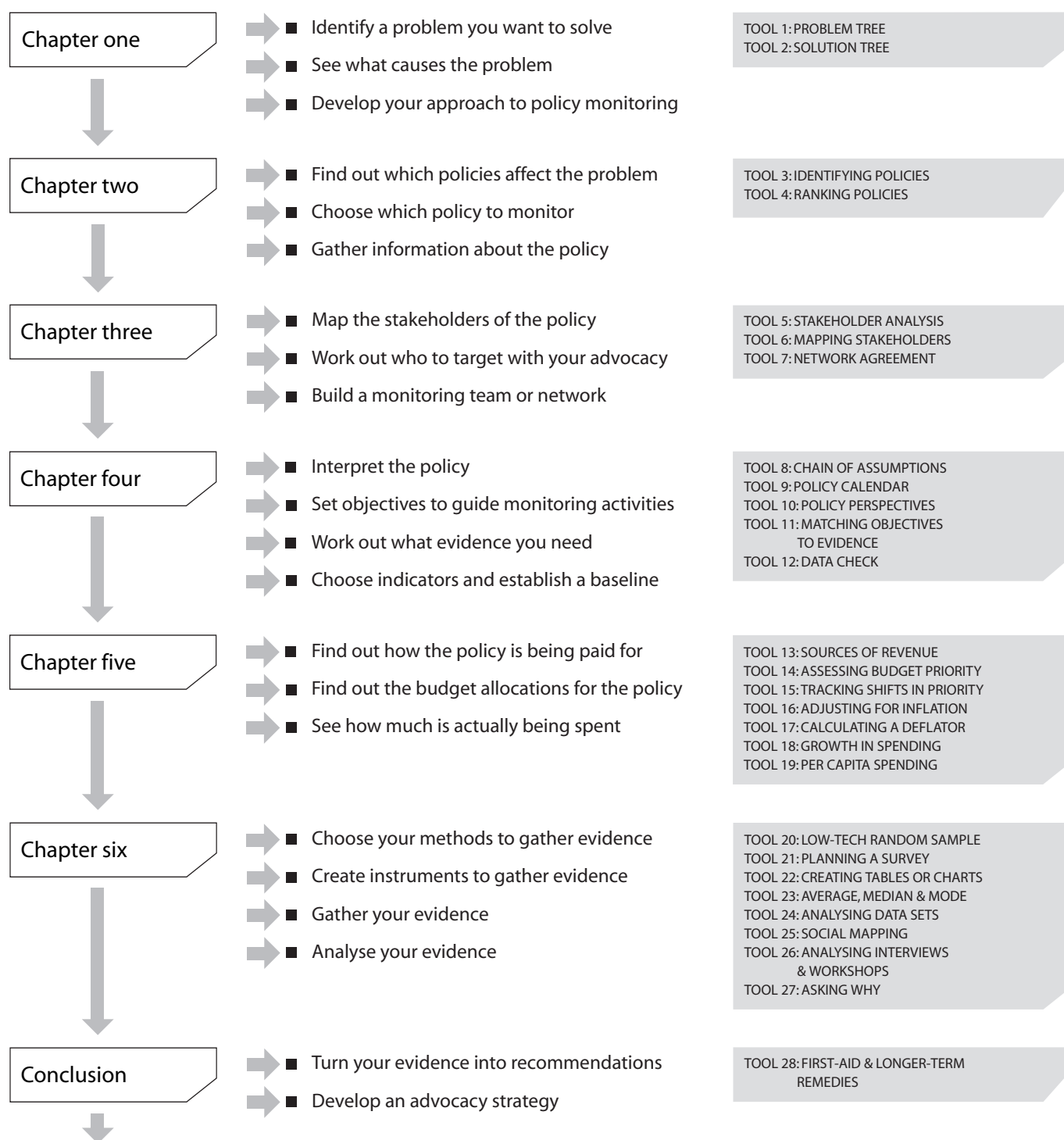
Who will find this resource useful?

The toolkit is directed towards civil society organisations (CSOs) in Africa. A CSO is understood as any organised group outside the family, government and private sector. This includes faith-based organisations, non-governmental and community-based organisations, gender, youth and women's organisations, academic or research bodies, special interest organisations and occupation-based groups. Within this large pool, the toolkit was written with the following target audience in mind:

- people with little or no former experience in monitoring government policies
- people who play the role of facilitators, planners, catalysts or trainers within their own organisations or networks
- CSOs with a specific commitment to economic justice and an interest in strengthening accountability at any level of government
- CSOs that have a strong social base and the capacity to build, coordinate or participate in networks.

What will you find in the toolkit?

The structure of this toolkit matches the main steps of a typical policy monitoring process. Each chapter looks into specific parts of the process:



Get change through your advocacy

Of course there is no single blueprint for all policy monitoring work. Every monitoring project does not have to include all the steps outlined above. Depending on your context, capacity and interests, you may only look into some of the activities in the flowchart – or you may choose to explore them all.

Navigating your way through the toolkit

Throughout the toolkit, you will come across the following icons:



Key words box: Where you see this icon, you will find short definitions or explanations of important terms and concepts.



Cutting a long story short: This icon draws your attention to summaries on important themes. If you want to lead a discussion in your organisation or network, these points can be used to prepare slides, transparencies, flip-charts or hand-outs.



Dig deeper: This icon means that you will find references to other resources where you can find out more about a given topic.



Case study: This icon marks examples and practical information about organisations and networks that have already undertaken policy monitoring.



Tool: Sections marked with this icon introduce you to methods and tools for monitoring government policies.

What will you *not* find in this resource?

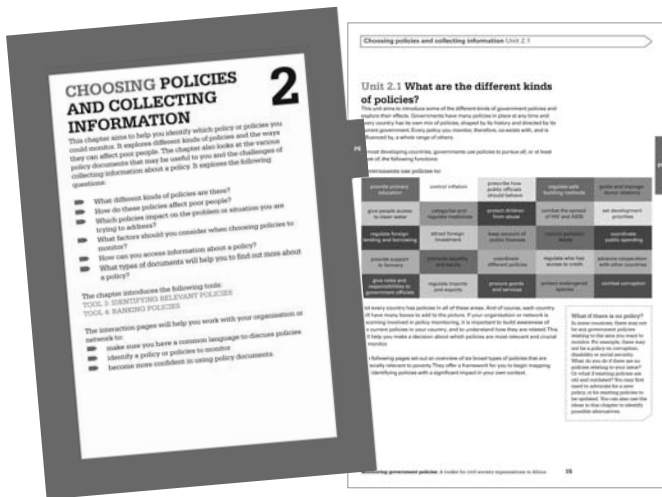
- a comprehensive guide to all policy issues
- information about specific policies in your own country
- advanced monitoring tools and skills
- a toolkit on advocacy or participation.

About the tools

- The 28 tools contained in this resource are not the only ones that can be used to monitor government policies. By exploring the links to other resources, you will be able to access information on many others – and on more complex aspects of the tools included here.
- The tools can be adapted to different modes and scales of use. For example, you might use some tools individually – when you conduct research on your own. You might choose other tools to use collectively – with a small project team or with larger groups, such as policy stakeholders or the members of a community.
- Most of the tools included in this resource require very little prior research experience or technical knowledge.
- Some tools depend on access to reliable policy information. Whether you can access such information may be an important factor in deciding which tools will work best in your context.
- As you work through the toolkit, you will be able to assess the relevance of each of the tools for your organisation and the policy or policies you would like to monitor.

How to use this toolkit

Each chapter in the toolkit forms its own building-block. You can work through the toolkit chapter by chapter – or select those chapters that interest you most. For example, if you already know exactly which policies you plan to monitor, you might decide not to read Chapter 2 (even though it could still give you some food for thought). Every chapter is made up of two main components:



Information pages

Each chapter contains information to read on your own, including case studies and practical tools. The information pages are divided into units covering different themes.



Interaction pages

The two last pages of each chapter are geared towards group discussion. They offer guidelines for working through the content of the chapter with members of your organisation or network.

The interaction pages at the end of each chapter can be used in more than one way. You can pick any of the activities in the toolkit and adapt them to create your own training or planning process. Another option is to work step by step through all the interaction pages with a project team or group. At the end of each set of interaction pages, you will find a check list to help you keep track of the process:

RECAP

Introduction

By now you should:

- have a clear sense of what to expect from this toolkit
- understand who this toolkit has been written for
- know how you can use the toolkit to learn more about policy monitoring.

The next steps are to:

- ➔ take a closer look at the meaning of policy and policy monitoring
- ➔ identify a problem or situation you want to change
- ➔ start developing your broad approach to monitoring.

Chapter 1 helps you to investigate these steps.

GETTING STARTED

1

This chapter aims to clarify the core concepts of the toolkit and help you start to plan your own policy monitoring work. It explores the following questions:

- What is policy and policy monitoring?
- What problem or situation do you want to change?
- Which approach to policy monitoring will you adopt?

The chapter introduces the following tools:

TOOL 1: PROBLEM TREE

TOOL 2: SOLUTION TREE

The interaction pages provide suggestions for group activities to generate a discussion about the issues raised in the chapter. They will help you to:

- develop a shared understanding of the term 'policy monitoring'
- identify a problem or situation you want to address
- clarify what you hope to achieve by policy monitoring.

Unit 1.1 What are the core concepts in policy monitoring?

This unit will introduce some of the core concepts covered in the toolkit. It will explain the terms *policy* and *policy monitoring*, the *policy cycle* and the *policy implementation process*.

What is policy?

There are many different kinds of policies. This toolkit is mainly concerned with **government policy**, also called **public policy**. In this context, policy is understood as a course of action, authorised by government, to achieve certain goals. Such a course of action may take many forms. It could, for example, take the form of a law, a strategy or a programme. Even a speech made by a president or a minister could outline a government's planned course of action.

Public policies are not created in a vacuum. Many people affected by these policies have an interest in determining the content of that policy. Policies can also be seen as processes: they change as they are implemented and rarely conform to plan. Policies can have intended and unintended outcomes.

What is policy monitoring?

Policy monitoring is about gathering evidence on a policy while it is being implemented and then using your findings to influence future courses of action.

This toolkit explores three main components of policy monitoring work:

- gathering evidence
- analysing evidence
- influencing policy decisions.

One of the best ways to find out more about policy monitoring is to learn from organisations already active in this field. The case study below offers an insight into the way one organisation has used policy monitoring to change peoples' lives.



dig deeper

Find out more about MEJN and its work at www.mejn.mw/



key words

What are stakeholders?

Stakeholders are all the people who have an interest in a particular policy, including people who can and do influence the policy, as well as those affected by it.



case study

Having an impact on poverty in Malawi

Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN) monitors government policies from a pro-poor perspective. It has more than 100 member organisations, spread around the country. Before joining the network, most of these members had no previous experience in policy monitoring. Since then, MEJN has helped these organisations to monitor how government policies impact on their communities. MEJN provides resources, training and support to its members, who in turn provide MEJN with information about how services are being delivered and other key issues at the local level. Working together in this way, MEJN and its district branches have encouraged public debate, participation and advocacy on policy issues at all levels of society. Their engagement with policies has produced concrete results in almost all districts, including:

- the re-opening of a hospital in Chitipa district
- the re-installation of a public borehole in Chitipa district
- the opening of a tomato-canning factory in Mangochi district
- securing drugs and an ambulance for a hospital in Mchinji district
- the completion of a road project in Mchinji district
- the re-opening of a prison in Nsanje district.

Source: Niamh Gaynor, *A Review of Activities and Impact*, MEJN District Chapters Programme, 2005.

Why there is no single model for policy monitoring

Every organisation faces the challenge of developing an approach that suits both its situation and goals. The following factors play an important role in defining which approach an organisation decides to adopt:



Time frames: Some organisations monitor policies on a continuous basis as part of their core function. For example, a health-policy-watch network would probably monitor health policies in an ongoing way. On the other hand, many monitoring projects have specific time frames. You could decide, for instance, to monitor the implementation of a specific policy over a twelve-month period. Or you could choose to monitor a policy area periodically, say every two or three years, to gather evidence on longer-term trends.



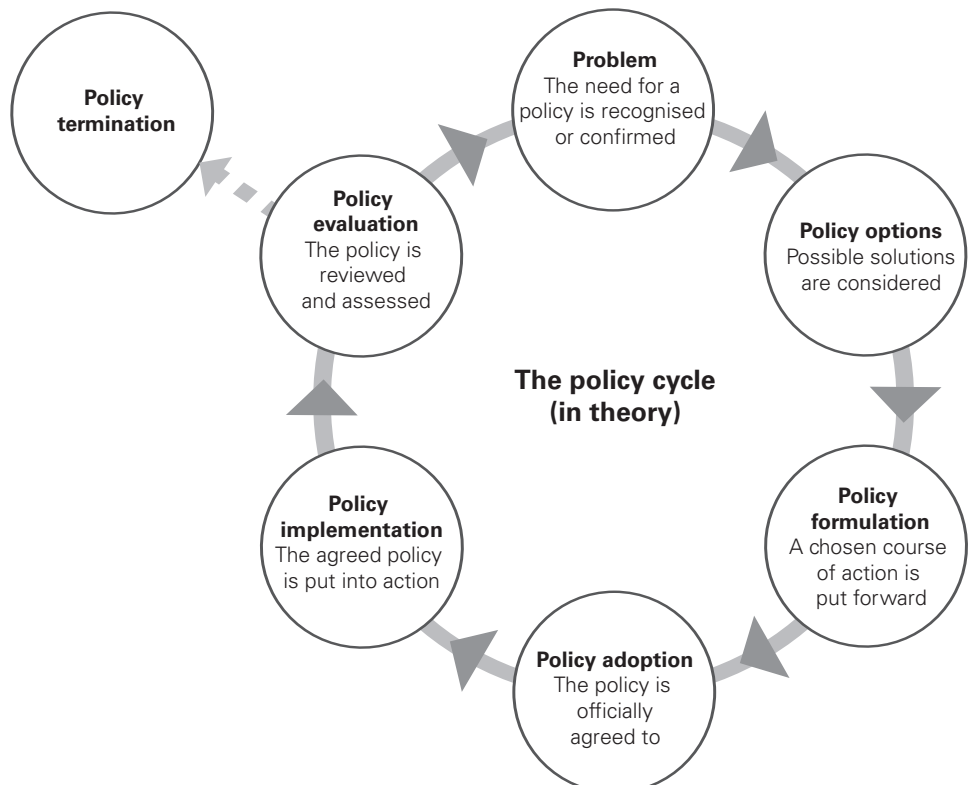
Level or sphere of government: Many organisations monitor government policies at the national level: they identify and track policies that are national in scope and gather evidence to present nationwide findings. By contrast, some very successful monitoring projects focus on the sub-national or local level. The more decentralisation there is in your country, the more likely you are to focus on policies at the sub-national and local level.



Policy focus: Monitoring projects differ vastly in terms of the issues and policy areas they focus on. Some organisations monitor specific sectors, like education, health, housing or welfare. Others might monitor how a certain policy – for example a trade policy – impacts across various sectors. There is really no prescription when it comes to selecting a focus for your monitoring work, although it may be advisable to start out with a single policy area, rather than taking on too many policies at once.

What is the policy cycle?

In theory, government policies are said to follow a cycle – something like the one shown in the chart below. But in reality, policies rarely conform to this pattern.



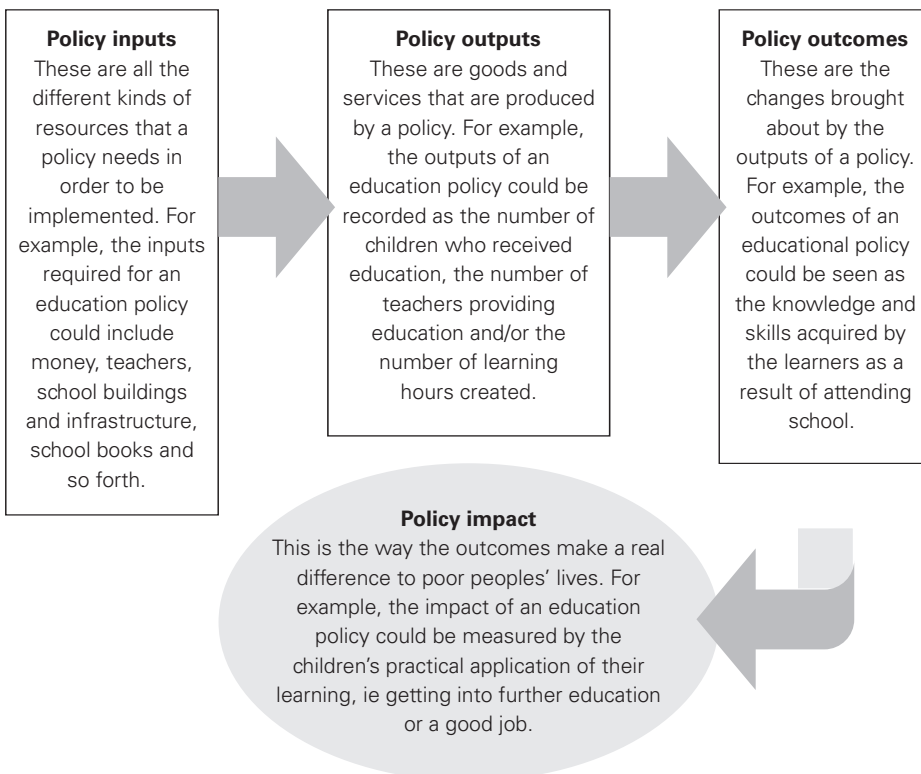
Political interests often influence how a policy unfolds in practice. For example, if the political leadership of a country changes after an election, policies may be scrapped or replaced without completing the cycle. However, it is still useful to consider the policy cycle, because it draws attention to different stages for engaging in policy work.

When CSOs participate in policy formulation, they are working primarily in one part of the policy cycle. Likewise, when they help to implement services, they are busy in another part of the policy cycle. Policy monitoring is really about taking account of the entire policy cycle, especially of what happens inside the arrows on the chart above. Many policy-monitoring initiatives give special attention to the lefthand side of the chart. In other words, they track what happens once a policy has been adopted to see how it is implemented and what it achieves. The focus of this toolkit is on that policy implementation stage of the policy process. It focuses on policies that are already in place.

No single model for policy implementation?

Policy implementation is the process whereby a written policy is turned into actions that make a (positive or negative) difference to peoples’ lives. This process involves a chain of causes and effects (called a causal chain). This chain is often complex as many different things can influence the effects a policy can have. The chain will be different for every policy in every context. The following terms provides us with a useful way of talking about this process:

The policy implementation process



key words

What is the difference between monitoring and evaluation?

The terms ‘monitoring’ and ‘evaluation’ are often used together. Monitoring is usually understood to be an ongoing activity that takes place during policy implementation. The aim is to track (and adjust) the process as it is unfolding. Evaluation, on the other hand, is generally conducted at the end of an implementation period. The aim is usually to help decision-makers assess whether a policy should continue or not.

Unit 1.2 Identifying the problems, causes and solutions

The aim of this unit is to consider how to take a deep look at a problem or situation you would like to impact on. This is one way to get started with policy monitoring. Investigating the causes of and possible solutions to a problem can help you to decide which policies it would be most relevant for you to monitor.

Two tools are presented in this unit: the problem tree and the solution tree.



TOOL 1: PROBLEM TREE

Aim: To gain a deeper understanding of a problem or situation by identifying its causes and effects.

Context: This tool works well with a group, and is a useful way to capture the ideas generated through discussion. It is especially helpful when you want to identify some of the longer-term causes of a problem.

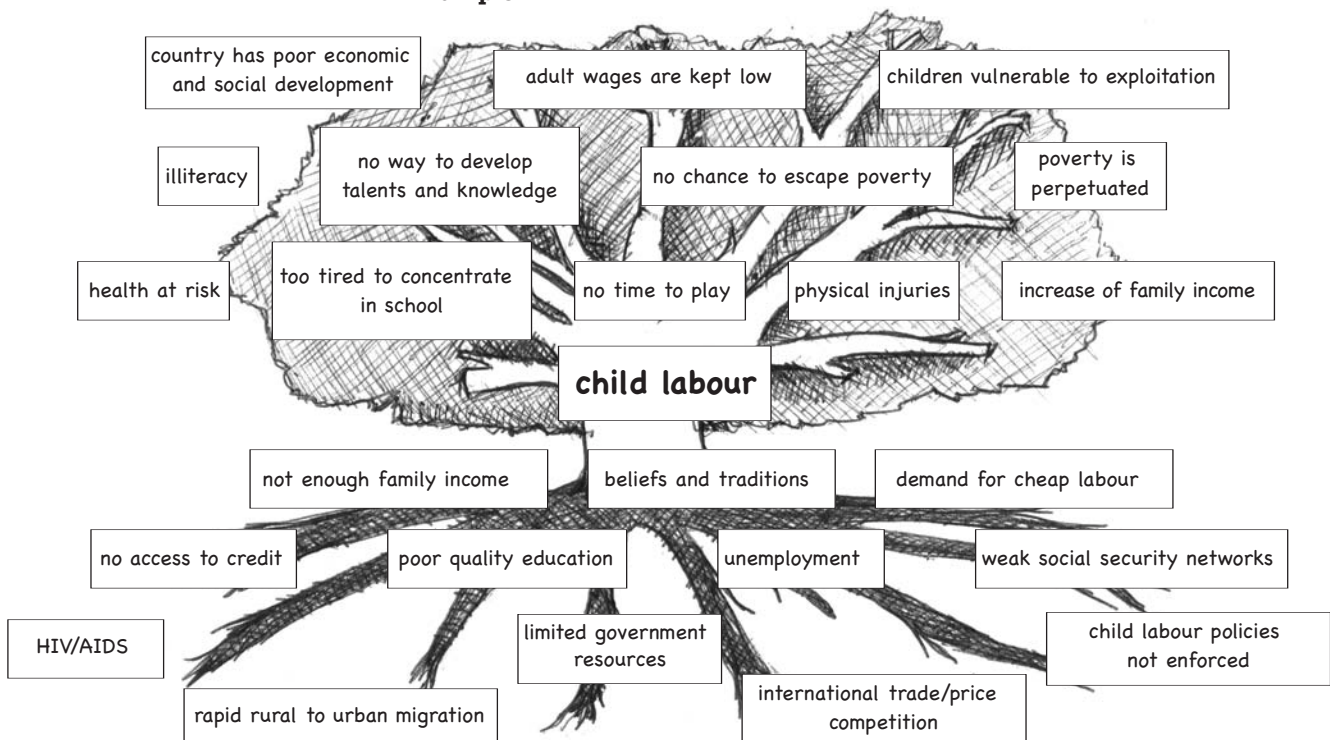
How to use this tool

Step 1: Draw a **tree trunk** on a large sheet of flip-chart paper. The trunk represents the problem or situation you are investigating.

Step 2: Add **roots**. They represent the causes of the problem or situation. Some roots are closer to the surface: these are the more obvious factors that contribute to the problem. But what causes these factors? The deeper you go, the more causes you uncover that help to contribute to the problem or situation.

Step 3: Draw the **branches**. These represent the effects of the problem. Some branches grow directly from the trunk: these are the problem's more immediate effects. But each branch may sprout many more branches, showing how the problem may contribute to a range of indirect and longer-term effects.

Example:



To influence future policy, it is also important to identify possible solutions to the problem or situation you are trying to change. You can test and review these solutions against the evidence you gather through policy monitoring. The most feasible solutions can form your recommendations for change (see **TOOL 28** in the Conclusion).



TOOL 2: SOLUTION TREE

Aim: To identify possible short- and long-term solutions to a problem.

Context: This tool can be used individually or for brainstorming with a group. You will need to have a problem tree (TOOL 1) already in place.

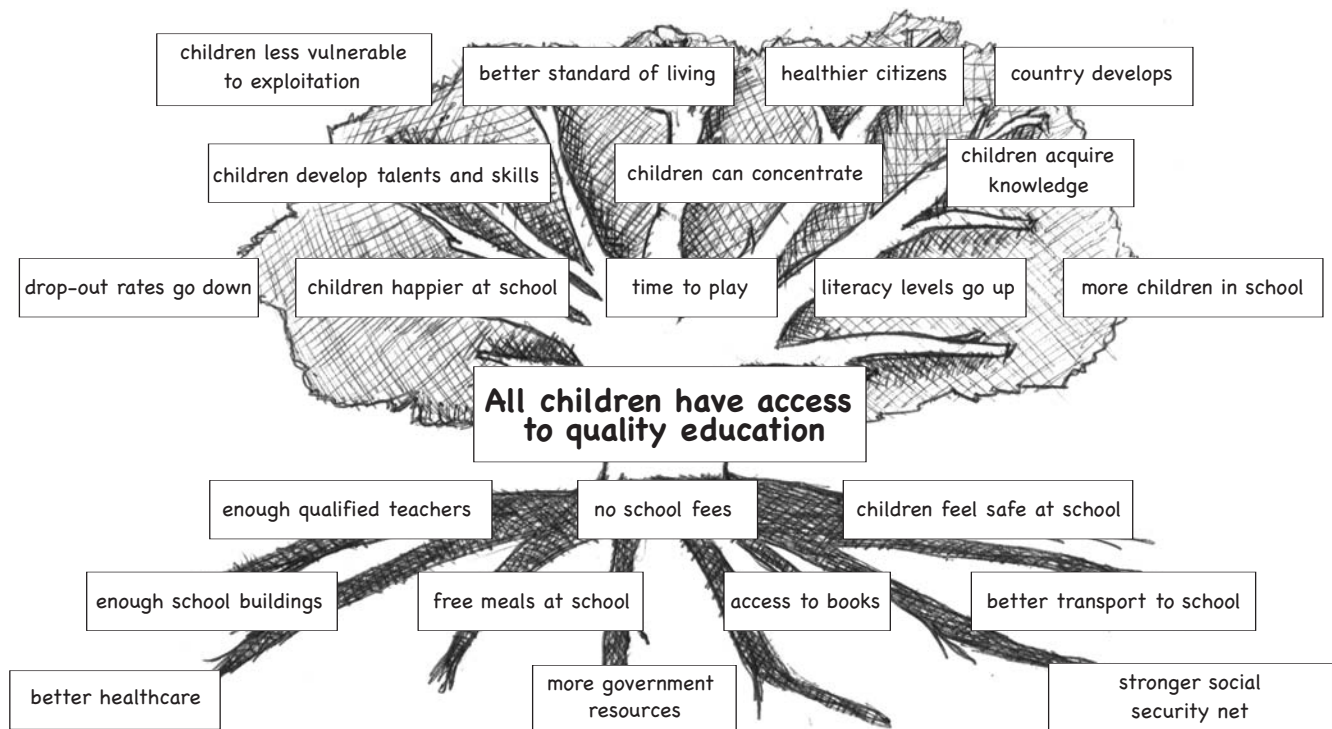
How to use this tool

Step 1: Draw a **tree trunk** on a large sheet of flip-chart paper. The trunk represents what you would like a certain situation to be like in the future.

Step 2: Add **roots**. They represent possible solutions or methods to bring about the desired future situation. The solutions should relate to the main causes of the problem as indicated in the roots of your problem tree. The roots that are closer to the surface are those that would contribute most directly to improving the situation. The solutions may also reinforce each other.

Step 3: Draw the **branches**. These represent the effects of the improved situation. Some branches grow directly from the trunk: these are the more immediate effects. The longer branches are used to represent the longer-term effects of the improved situation.

Example:



Unit 1.3 Developing your own approach to policy monitoring

This unit aims to help you to begin planning your approach to policy monitoring by thinking about three important questions:

- From what perspective will you monitor policies?
- What level of participation will you build into your work?
- What does adopting a team approach to policy monitoring mean?

Monitoring perspectives

There is no way to monitor government policies from a neutral position. All policy monitoring is informed by a perspective of some kind. Organisations are motivated by different principles, beliefs and priorities. It may be a commitment to human rights, compassion for the poor, dedication to non-violence, the desire to strengthen democracy – to name just a few possibilities. In planning your approach to policy monitoring, a good starting point is to be explicit about your guiding principles and perspective. This will help you to define the broad aim of your policy monitoring. Here are a few examples:

The **Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP)** is an NGO working to advance the human rights and empowerment of women. So when they monitor government policies, their broad aim is to see how these policies affect women and gender equality in their society.

Gender perspective

The **Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR)** in Zambia is guided by the vision of a society where faith promotes justice for all in every sphere of life, especially for the poor. So when they monitor government policies, they assess how these policies contribute to, or undermine, social justice.

Social justice perspective

The **Social Enterprise Development (SEND) Foundation** works to promote livelihood security and equality between men and women in west Africa. So when they monitor government policies, their broad aim is to track how these policies support or threaten household security and equality.

Livelihoods and equality perspective

The **Children's Budget Unit (CBU)** is a South African CSO that would like to see all children enjoying the full spectrum of their rights. So when they monitor government policies, their broad aim is to see how well these policies deliver or protect children's rights and advance children's wellbeing.

Child rights perspective

Working in a participatory way

There are no hard and fast rules about who should be involved in monitoring policies. The work could be undertaken as a small project team, as an organisation or a network. However, experience shows that the more participation you can build into the process, the more effective your policy monitoring work will be in the long-term. Who participates – and how – can vary greatly. In fact, many kinds of processes are described as ‘participatory’ even though they may range anywhere between the following poles:



Depending on the quality of participation, this approach can add depth and insight to all policy-related work. However, it is important to take the following into account:

Challenges of participatory approaches

- Representation is often a problem: there is a need to guard against the assumption that participants can speak on behalf of others.
- Ideas generated through participation are not always or inevitably reliable or effective.
- Power relations among participants affect what is said about what and to whom. Speaking out can make you vulnerable.
- Beware of exploitation: participation processes can be resource- and time-consuming for poor people without providing benefits or decision-making power in exchange.
- One-off participation events can't take the place of in-depth research and analysis.
- The rhetoric of participation can be misused to mask processes that are superficial, unequal or geared to further vested interests.

Conditions for effective participation

- The right voices must be present: this requires careful thinking about the stakeholders you intend to engage with (see chapter 3) and explicit planning to ensure that the process does not exclude any of them.
- The process must ensure that those voices can speak: it should be designed in such a way that all participants feel able and willing to contribute.
- Those voices must be heard – by each other and documented for others. This involves finding effective means to facilitate dialogue among stakeholders and reporting on the ideas that emerge.
- Those voices must be listened to: the process should ensure that the views of participants are made known to policy-makers and other powerful stakeholders.

Source: Summarised from Linda Mayoux, *Between Tyranny and Utopia: Participatory Evaluation for Pro-Poor Development*, Performance Assessment Resource Centre, Birmingham, 2005. Available at www.parcinfo.org/documents/PARC%20Products/Participatory%20Evaluation.doc

A team approach to monitoring

Various policy stakeholders could be involved in monitoring its implementation. In chapter 3, you can find out more about different kinds of policy stakeholders and how to build a network of stakeholders to support your work. It is useful from the outset to consider what it means to develop a team approach to policy monitoring.

Policy monitoring can, of course, be undertaken by a single CSO. It is not impossible for a large organisation, with diverse skills and a broad membership base, to undertake policy monitoring on its own. Yet in most cases, there is a need for various organisations and individuals to collaborate when monitoring a policy:

- Some organisations or people may have skills or contacts that could play a crucial role in gathering evidence.
- Others may have experience in analysing different kinds of information.
- Some may have greater capacity than others to advocate to different audiences.
- Some organisations may be able to contribute in more than one way, but working at different levels (see unit 3.3).

The following case study illustrates the advantages of adopting a team approach to monitoring:



case study

A partnership between CSOs, academics and government in Tanzania

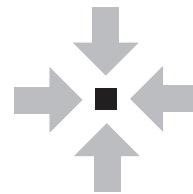
The Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP) has been working since the early 1990s to advance gender equality and women's empowerment. In 1997, it launched a gender budget initiative (GBI) to influence and transform government's policy planning and budgeting. The aim was to make these processes more responsive to the needs of marginalised communities, particularly women, poor men and youth.

The GBI's research activities have typically been undertaken by teams of three: including a gender activist or CSO-based researcher, an academic and a government staff member, such as a planner or budget officer. The academic partners bring sound research methods and specialist knowledge to the table. The CSO-based members make sure that a gender perspective and participatory methods are integrated into the process. The government officials, in turn, provide access to data that would otherwise have been out of the reach of CSOs. Great emphasis is placed on creating government ownership of the research findings, to increase the likelihood of government acting on those findings.

The GBI has benefited a great deal from this approach. It has contributed to open and constructive relationships with officials in various ministries. It has also meant that the findings of their work could more readily be taken up and fed back into government decision-making.

Source: Find out more about the TGNP and its gender budget initiative from www.tgnp.org.

interaction



ACTIVITY 1: WHAT IS POLICY MONITORING?

Outcome : Participants all understand what is meant by policy monitoring.

Step 1: Hand out copies of the case studies on MEJN (see page 5) and the TGNP (see page 12). Gathering in small groups, ask participants to discuss the following questions relating to the case studies:

- How does MEJN's work affect the lives of people living in poverty in Malawi?
- What methods does the TGNP use to bring about change?
- What are the strengths of each of their strategies?

Step 2: Invite the groups to report back on the main insights emerging from their discussions.

Step 3: Wrap up by emphasising the following points –

- There are many different ways to do policy monitoring work.
- In most cases, policy monitoring involves three main components:
 - a) gathering evidence about the implementation of a government policy
 - b) analysing that evidence, and
 - c) using the evidence to advocate for change.

ACTIVITY 2: WHAT PROBLEM OR SITUATION DO WE WANT TO CHANGE?

Outcome: Participants have identified the problem(s) or situation(s) in their context that they most want to address.

Step 1: Give each participant up to ten cards and ask them to write the most urgent problems facing people in their context on them. Each problem should be written in key words only, on one side of the card.

Step 2: Gather all the cards and display them, face up, on the ground or on a table top. Give every participant three or four voting markers (these could be small pebbles, sweets, nuts – anything they can easily carry and distribute).

Step 3: Invite the participants to walk around and study all the cards. They should place each of their voting markers on top of the problems they think are most urgent to address.

Step 4: Stand back and see which cards gained the most markers. These are the problems the group has given priority to. Restate the problems clearly to the group and cluster them, if appropriate. Ask for confirmation from the group that this selection now stands as its collective choice of a problem or problems to focus on.

Now take a deeper look at a problem or situation you have chosen to focus on:

- Use **TOOL 1** to gain a deeper understanding of the root causes and effects of the problem you have chosen to focus on.
- Use **TOOL 2** to generate some possible solutions to the problem.

These pages offer some suggestions for facilitating a group discussion on the main themes raised in this chapter.

Welcome to...

AN INTRODUCTION TO POLICY MONITORING

1. What is policy monitoring?
2. What problem or situation do we want to change?
3. What do we want to achieve?

interaction

ACTIVITY 3: WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?

Outcome: Participants have established a shared purpose for undertaking policy monitoring work and clarified what they hope to achieve by working together.

Step 1: Invite participants to imagine that they have already undertaken a monitoring project to address the problem they have identified. They should see themselves standing in the future – perhaps two years from now – looking back on their policy monitoring work. Ask participants to name a date and write it up where everyone can see it.

Step 2: Ask the participants to create the front-page newspaper article that appears on that day, describing the enormous effect their monitoring work has had. Their article should explain:

- what changes have occurred as a result of the monitoring activities
- who benefited from those changes
- who was involved in the project and why their participation was so essential
- why this project is ground-breaking and news-worthy.

The article can also be illustrated with mock photographs and quotes.

Step 3: Invite the groups (if there is more than one) to present their 'front pages' to one another. If there is only one group, ask them to present theirs nonetheless.

Step 4: Bringing all participants together again, extract information from the newspaper articles to complete the following sentences:

- Through our policy monitoring work, we hope to bring about...
- Our approach to policy monitoring will ensure that...

RECAP



Chapter 1: Getting started

By now you should:

- be familiar with the terms policy and policy monitoring
- have identified a problem to impact on through your policy monitoring work
- begun to develop your broad aim and approach to policy monitoring.

The next steps are to:

- ➔ choose which policies to monitor
- ➔ collect available information about these policies.

Chapter 2 provides guidance on these steps.

CHOOSING POLICIES AND COLLECTING INFORMATION

2

This chapter aims to help you identify which policy or policies you could monitor. It explores different kinds of policies and the ways they can affect people living in poverty. The chapter also looks at the various policy documents that may be useful to you and the challenges of collecting information about a policy. It explores the following questions:

- What different kinds of policies are there?
- How do these policies affect people living in poverty?
- Which policies impact on the problem or situation you are trying to address?
- What factors should you consider when choosing policies to monitor?
- How can you access information about a policy?
- What types of documents will help you to find out more about a policy?

The chapter introduces the following tools:

TOOL 3: IDENTIFYING RELEVANT POLICIES

TOOL 4: RANKING POLICIES

The interaction pages will help you work with your organisation or network to:

- make sure you have a common language to discuss policies
- identify a policy or policies to monitor
- become more confident in using policy documents.



Unit 2.1 What are the different kinds of policies?

This unit aims to introduce some of the different kinds of government policies and explore their effects. Governments have many policies in place at any time and every country has its own mix of policies, shaped by its history and directed by its current government. Every policy you monitor, therefore, co-exists with, and is influenced by, a whole range of others.

In most developing countries, governments use policies to pursue all, or at least most of, the following functions.

Governments use policies to:

provide primary education	control inflation	prescribe how public officials should behave	regulate safe building methods	guide and manage donor relations
give people access to clean water	categorise and regulate medicines	protect children from abuse	combat the spread of HIV and AIDS	set development priorities
regulate foreign lending and borrowing	attract foreign investment	keep account of public finances	control pollution levels	coordinate public spending
provide support to farmers	promote equality and equity	coordinate different policies	regulate who has access to credit	advance cooperation with other countries
give roles and responsibilities to government officials	regulate imports and exports	procure goods and services	protect endangered species	combat corruption

Not every country has policies in all of these areas. And of course, each country will have many boxes to add to the picture. If your organisation or network is becoming involved in policy monitoring, it is important to build awareness of the current policies in your country, and to understand how they are related. This will help you make a decision about which policies are most relevant and crucial to monitor.

The following pages set out an overview of six broad types of policies that are especially relevant to poverty. They offer a framework for you to begin mapping and identifying policies with a significant impact in your own context.

What if there is no policy?

In some countries, there may not be any government policies relating to the area you want to monitor. For example, there may not be a policy on corruption, disability or social security. What do you do if there are no policies relating to your issue? Or what if existing policies are old and outdated? You may first need to advocate for a new policy, or for existing policies to be updated. You can also use the ideas in this chapter to identify possible alternatives.

Policies that may impact on poverty

Sectoral policies

Most countries have numerous policies that guide or regulate the delivery of services such as health, education, water, finance, housing, policing, welfare, justice, agriculture and so forth. These are often called sectoral policies. Many sectoral policies have a direct bearing on people's everyday lives. It is through sectoral policies that most goods and services are delivered (or not delivered) to people. For example, there are clear implications for people living in poverty when an important health policy is not implemented well.

Macro-economic policies

Governments use a variety of policies to influence economic activities in their country. Such policies are used, for example, to regulate government income and expenditure, to curb inflation, to promote economic growth and to stimulate job creation. Governments do not have total control over the macro-economic environment. What happens on a global level has an important influence. Yet macro-economic policies influence how much money will be available for spending on goods and services to reduce poverty. It also affects how many people will be able to earn a fair income. So from a poverty perspective, macro-economic policies are an important focus for monitoring.

Institutional policies

Governments create policies to guide and manage their own institutions, employees and work processes. For example, most countries have policies on how public funds should be managed and on how civil society can participate in decision making. These kinds of policies have an important influence on effective implementation of other policies. They make it possible to plan, coordinate, equip, staff, finance or report on policy implementation. It is not enough for institutional policies merely to exist, they also have to be adhered to, and recourse taken when this is not the case. Institutional policies can be key targets for monitoring. For example, it may be useful to track the public finance management or staff performance policies of a government.

People living in poverty

Regulatory policies

Regulatory policies are used to impose norms and standards across a wide range of areas, such as pollution levels, food safety, medicines, endangered species and construction. Formal monitoring bodies are often created to ensure these kinds of policies are adhered to. Yet, there may be times when CSOs want to include regulatory policies in their monitoring. For example, if water pipes in a poor urban area always seem to leak, it may be useful to look at the regulations guiding water provision and collect evidence on their infringement.

National development plans

Many governments already have policies to guide their overall strategy for development. Such policies may be called a poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) or other names: development plans, social accords, vision documents, national strategies, anti-poverty policies or five-year plans. These kinds of policies generally state how a government plans to bring about positive changes in a country over a given time. They usually combine elements of sectoral, institutional and macro-economic policies, often held together by a set of guiding principles or policy goals. By their nature, these kinds of policies call for high levels of coordination and collaboration across government.

Global and regional policies

International and regional accords – such as human rights treaties and trade agreements – influence the policies adopted and implemented by governments. In some instances, it may be useful to monitor discrepancies or conflicts between national and international policies, and how this undermines progress in combating poverty. For developing countries, the policies of donor organisations and international financial institutions (IFIs), such as the World Bank or IMF, also play a powerful and controversial role. The influence of donor agendas on a country's policies, and the conditions attached to IFI loans, can be important areas to monitor.

Unit 2.2 Which policies could you monitor?

This unit will consider the choice of policies you could monitor from a few different angles. In some countries, many CSOs like to focus on policies seen as ‘closest’ to poverty, such as those in health, education and welfare, and will closely monitor the implementation of PRSPs. More and more organisations are also beginning to monitor institutional and macro-economic policies in a more robust way and this unit will look at ways this could be done.

THINK ABOUT How to monitor PRSP policies

Poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) have prompted a great deal of debate and controversy in many countries. Introduced by the World Bank and IMF, the PRSP approach is intended to create a new, more legitimate and effective way for low-income developing countries to access foreign aid. Governments are obliged to monitor the implementation of their PRSPs – and to include CSOs and other stakeholders in the process. So in theory, CSOs should be able to play a substantial role monitoring PRSPs. In practice, this is not always the case.

In choosing which policies to monitor, one option, is to couple your monitoring activities with the PRSP (if there is one) in your country. Has the PRSP experience thus far created at least some real scope for countries to set their own policies with civil society involvement? If so, there may well be good reason to engage actively with the formal PRSP monitoring and evaluation process. Where the PRSP process has been sidelined from the main policy debates, is overly donor-driven or merely pays lip service to public participation, you could consider other options. For example, CSOs may choose to conduct independent monitoring to verify their government’s progress reports and to present alternative evidence on PRSP progress.



key words

What are Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)?

A PRSP is a document that provides an analysis of what life is like for the poor in a country and presents a national strategy for reducing it. PRSPs are closely associated with the *Enhanced Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative* of the World Bank and IMF, which required countries to formulate PRSPs in return for debt relief. PRSPs are now used by countries to access aid as well as debt relief. According to the World Bank, the strategies contained within a PRSP should be:

- **country-driven:** led by government with civil society and private sector participation
- **results-orientated:** focused on outcomes that benefit the poor
- **comprehensive:** taking the multi-dimensional nature of poverty into account
- **partnership-orientated:** with good coordination between governments and donors
- based on a **long-term perspective** for poverty reduction.



dig deeper

Learn more about PRSPs from

- www.trocaire.org/policyandadvocacy/prsp.htm
- www.worldbank.org/prsp



dig deeper

Find out more about corruption from

- www.transparency.org
- www.oecd.org/department/0,2688,en2649_34855_1_1_1_1_1,00.html
- www1.worldbank.org/publicsector/anticorrupt/index.cfm
- www.unodc.org/unodc/en/corruption_toolkit.html
- www.anticorruptionsl.org

THINK ABOUT Focusing on the delivery of public services

The main vehicle used by governments to address poverty *directly* is the delivery of services to the poor themselves. For example, peoples’ lives are directly improved when their communities have clean water, when children can attend school and when people can access health treatment. When choosing a focus for your monitoring work, one option is to consider which services are *meant* to be delivered directly to the poor in your context, then to identify the policies that govern the delivery of those services. The case study below illustrates the benefits of choosing a single sector to focus on and then tracking it thoroughly. You could also monitor how privatisation is affecting vital public services, as is happening in Ghana (see the case study on CAP of Water in unit 2.3).



case study

Tracking education policy in Malawi

The Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education (CSCOBE) was established in 2001 to monitor and influence government policy on education. Free primary education was introduced in Malawi in 1994. However, children’s education is often compromised by unsafe learning environments, inadequately trained teachers and the absence of textbooks and materials. With more than 50 member organisations and nine district networks, the CSCOBE advocates for more rapid progress in delivering quality education for all. To help put their message across, they gather evidence about the delivery of education services in Malawi and report their findings to parliament, communities and the media. The CSCOBE monitors whether resources allocated to the education sector actually reach the children they were intended for. Community-based monitors track whether schools receive the materials, textbooks and chalk promised to them in the budget. They compare what is actually happening in schools with what the government promised to deliver in the Malawi PRSP. They have also conducted surveys to find out how satisfied people are with education services. In this way, the CSCOBE uses an innovative combination of methods to shed light on the delivery of key services that impact directly on peoples’ lives.

Source: Raphael Mweninguwe, ‘Quality Education remains a pipe dream’, 15 January 2005, News from Africa website: http://www.newsfromafrica.org/newsfromafrica/articles/art_9116.html.

THINK ABOUT Looking beyond service delivery

While some policies directly affect the living conditions of people living in poverty, others have a more indirect influence. Even within the sectors – such as health and welfare – not all policies are equally close to the public. For example, a policy on medical research into infectious childhood diseases does not deliver anything directly to poor children now. Yet by generating new insights on prevention and treatment, it can have a tremendous impact on children’s lives in the future. Many policies affect poor people even if they are not aimed directly towards them. Most macro-economic, institutional and regulatory policies have an *indirect* but profound effect on peoples’ livelihoods and the state’s ability to deliver. The following case study shows that such indirect policies can provide fruitful ground for monitoring.



case study

Keeping an eye on corruption in Uganda

Uganda Debt Network (UDN) is an advocacy and lobbying coalition. Its mission is to promote pro-poor policies and the participation of poor people in the policy processes. It also monitors the use of public resources and calls for these to be managed in an open, accountable and transparent manner, for the benefit of the Ugandan people. It believes that citizens have a critical role to play in working against corruption. Through its grassroots anti-corruption campaign people are encouraged to play an active role in holding public officials in central and local government accountable for their actions. UDN has also organised campaigns on good governance and supported legal action on behalf of the poor and marginalised against the government. It has monitored the implementation and enforcement of laws and advocates and lobbies for stronger political will on the part of the government to combat corruption.

Source: www.udn.or.ug.

Looking at the policy landscape

Here are some points to keep in mind when finding out about policies in your own context.

- When you start to investigate the policies you want to monitor, you will notice they are in various stages of development. Most often, a policy first appears in the form of a draft proposal or discussion paper. It is then usually revised, sometimes several times, before being adopted or rejected.
- This toolkit is primarily concerned with policies once they have been adopted to see what difference they made to poor people's lives. However, it is useful to take note of draft policies as there may be a new policy you want to influence before it is adopted.
- Once adopted, policies differ in legal status. Some policies become law, giving them formal legal sanction: not adhering to them becomes legally punishable. Not all policies are turned into legislation. Some may take the form of policy statements or plans of action, adopted officially by the government, but never enacted as law.
- When identifying policies to monitor, it is important to consider their legal status. This will determine what sanctions can be applied if a policy is not implemented as planned.



TOOL 3: IDENTIFYING RELEVANT POLICIES

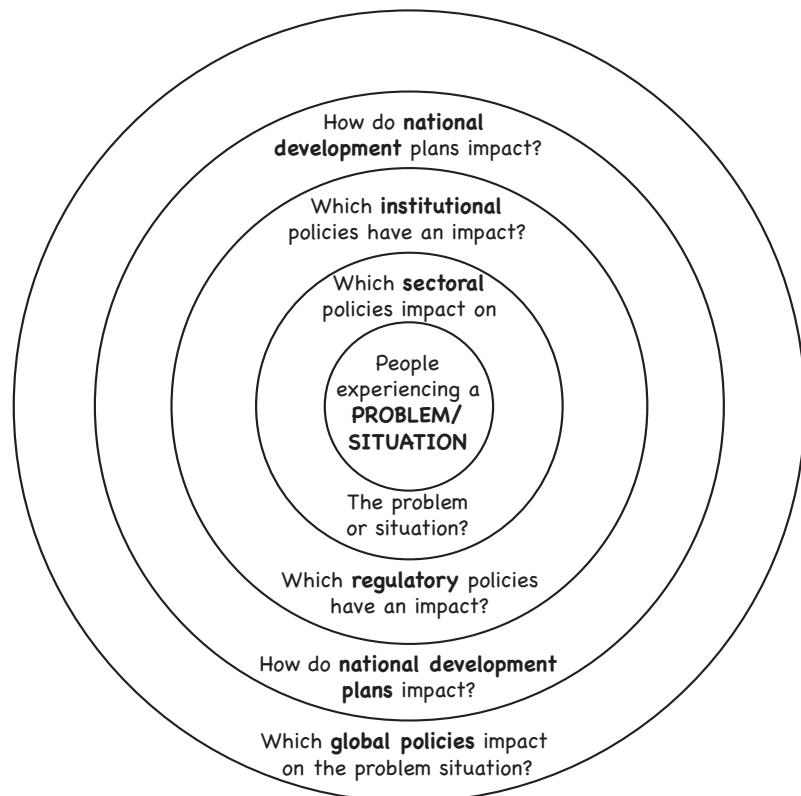
Aim: To identify policies that have a direct and indirect impact on a particular problem or issue.

Context: This tool can be used individually or with a group. It works well as a group brainstorming method. It may be necessary to follow up the group exercise with more in-depth research to identify all the policies that have both a direct and indirect impact.

How you can use this tool with a group

Step 1: On a large sheet of paper, draw a set of concentric circles like those in the chart below. Do not add any text.

Step 2: Write the name of the problem or situation you want to change in the centre circle.



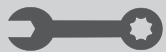
Step 3: Check that participants understand the term **sectoral policies**. If necessary, discuss some examples of sectoral policies familiar to them.

Step 4: Ask the participants to identify all the sectoral policies they can think of that have a bearing on the problem or situation at the centre of the diagram. Write these into the first layer or concentric circle immediately around the centre.

Step 5: Discuss examples of **macro-economic, institutional and regulatory policies**. Invite participants to identify policies in these categories that may have a bearing on the sectoral policies already written up on the diagram – or on the issue or problem in the centre of the diagram.

Step 6: Lead a brief discussion about broad **national development plans**. Ask the group to identify those that have an impact on the problem or the policies you have already written up. Add these to the third circle of the diagram.

Step 7: Consider different kinds of **global policies**. Working with participants' suggestions, add relevant policies that have international scope to the outer layer.



TOOL 4: RANKING POLICIES

Aim: To compare how policies vary in terms of the way they impact on a problem or issue.

Context: This tool can be used individually or with a group. It is something you can easily draw up on a large sheet of newsprint and complete as a group. Before you start, you should already have identified the policies you would like to rank (see TOOL 3).

How to use this tool with a group

Step 1: Have a list or display of identified policies at hand (see TOOL 3). Explain to participants that the next step is to rank these policies in terms of the level of impact they could have on the issue you want to address.

Policies which have a:	major impact	minor impact
direct impact	1	3
indirect impact	2	4

Step 2: Draw a table like the one below and display it where everyone can see it.

Step 3: Discuss the difference between policies that have a **direct** and an **indirect** impact. Then consider what it means for a policy to have a **major** or **minor** impact on a situation or issue. Explain that these concepts are not fixed in stone: it is up to the group to define them in a way that is relevant in your context.

Step 4: As a group, look at your list of identified policies and mark all those you think have an indirect impact on the issue or problem you are trying to address.

Step 5: Working only with these indirect policies for now, invite participants to decide which of them belong in box 2 on the chart, and which in box 4. Explain that policies can be placed anywhere in a box to emphasise the severity of their impact.

Step 6: As you discuss each indirect policy, write its name on a small card or post-it note. Use advice from the group to position each of the cards or notes somewhere in boxes 2 or 4 of the chart.

Step 7: Now consider the policies that the group feels have a direct impact on the issue or problem. Repeat steps 5 and 6, this time placing the cards or sticky notes in boxes 1 and 3.

Step 8: Once all the policies have been located, take special note of those placed in boxes 1 and 2. Read from top to bottom, the policies in these boxes should give you a priority list of possible policies to monitor.



to cut a long story short

Issues to consider when choosing policies to monitor

- Some policies have **direct** and intentional affect on peoples' lives while others have a more **indirect** and unintentional consequences. But both can make a profound difference to the poverty people experience.
- Policies also differ in terms of the **timeframe** they need to begin making a difference – and this could influence your choice. Some policies have an immediate effect, for example a policy providing clean drinking water to rural communities. On the other hand, an education policy that promotes greater emphasis on science and mathematics can only be expected to produce benefits over the longer term.
- Policies may operate at national, regional or local levels. So it is important to take the **geographical spread** of implementation into account when making your choice.
- Some policies have a more **positive** impact on the poor than others. They may be implemented too slowly or inefficiently, but have the potential to do good. On the other hand, there are other policies that, by their very nature, produce **negative** outcomes for the poor – such as introducing or increasing fees for public services like education and water. Choosing to monitor such policies can reveal their adverse effects and bring them under closer public scrutiny.

Unit 2.3 How you can access policy information

This unit aims to look at the challenges of finding information about the policies you are interested in and show why it is important to consider access to information when selecting policies to monitor.

Challenges in information gathering

It is not easy to monitor policies when you cannot access relevant and reliable information. ‘Transparency’ is often used to describe the degree of openness or access to information in a country. What can you do when you cannot get hold of government documents about a particular policy? First, you could find out if there is a law giving citizens the right of access to information. If so, it should be possible to lobby for access to the documents you need. If transparency exists only in law, but not in practice, you may need to campaign for greater access to government information. In countries where access to information is not guaranteed as a right, this will be an even more challenging task.

The table below lays out some typical information challenges you may encounter and provides some suggestions on how to address such a situation.

Information challenge	Possible actions
The policy document exists but you can't gain access to it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invoke access to information laws. • Lobby government information offices. • Make formal requests in writing to the government departments in question for access to the documents and keep a record of your efforts. • Ask the media to report on your denial of access to policy information. • Talk to other CSOs: do they have copies or know who does? • Talk to powerful stakeholders inside or outside government: do they have copies or could they help put pressure on someone who does? • Develop closer relationships with key people in relevant government departments and convince them that they can benefit from your work (see chapter 3 for more information on building stakeholder relationships).
You can access the policy documents, but they are incomplete or unreliable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplement the documents with information from other sources, including reports or data from other government departments, CSOs, international bodies, universities, etc. • Develop or bring in external analytical abilities (for example a statistician from a local university) to study the data and assess what can/not be used. • Interview government officials to clarify and fill in what is missing from documents or explain discrepancies (see unit 6.1 for more on interviews).
The policy information you need does not exist/has not been recorded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop your own survey to gather relevant information (see unit 6.2). • See if you can use existing information sources (such as household survey data) to extract the information you need. • Advocate for better information: call on government to begin recording the kind of data needed to monitor policy implementation.

The following two case studies show how CSOs have worked to gain access to policy information and to ensure that policy decisions are made under public scrutiny.



case study

Overcoming obstacles to information gathering in Sierra Leone

Network Movement for Justice & Development (NMJD) in Sierra Leone has been monitoring policies in the mining sector for several years. In 2003 the government, in consultation with the World Bank, commissioned a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of a diamond works, which had closed down during the country's civil war. NMJD decided to monitor the entire process to ensure that any new concessions for diamond mining would be allocated fairly and in the country's best interests. The EIA was meant to involve a great deal of public participation in the process. However, the eventual assessment report was sent directly to the World Bank without any public input. NMJD immediately insisted that the report should be made public. They wrote letters to various ministries and public figures to request copies of the EIA report, but to no avail. They then appealed to friends and partner organisations outside the country to intervene before the document could be approved. The document was made available on the World Bank website and NMJD made copies straightaway and distributed them among CSOs in Sierra Leone. NMJD collected many views on the issue and sent these (again via partner organisations) to the World Bank. Ultimately, the EIA was not approved and the government was forced to revise its approach to mining policy.

Source: Find out more about the NMJD at www.nmjd.org



case study

Campaigning for transparency in the water sector in Ghana

The Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC) is an NGO working for pro-poor policy development on many different fronts in Ghana. In 2002, it was instrumental in setting up the Coalition against Privatisation of Water (CAP of Water), a national movement aiming to achieve access to water for all Ghanaians, backed by a statutory right to water, by 2008. By monitoring the process of restructuring in the water sector, the coalition has drawn attention to pressure from the IMF and World Bank to make donor funding for utilities dependent on privatisation. It has campaigned extensively for alternative public sector-led policies and plans to be considered for the management of water in Ghana. CAP of Water also calls for greater transparency in the water sector reform process, including full public disclosure of all documents, bids and negotiations between the government and potential private sector companies.

Source: www.isodec.org.gh/campaigns/water/index.htm

How do you find out about the background to a policy?

Many documents may have been produced during the formulation of a policy and you can often learn a lot from these. Such documents could include, for example, earlier draft versions of the policy, submissions or statements from different stakeholders, records of the policy planning process, feasibility studies and minutes of parliamentary debates on the policy. Looking at documents relating to the background of a policy can help you to establish:

- how much consultation and participation went into the design of the policy
- whether there is broad ownership of or support for the policy
- the main points of disagreement or concern that emerged during policy development
- whose interests are best represented in the final version.

Unit 2.4 Collecting policy documents

This unit aims to highlight the different kinds of policy documents and the types of information you may gain from each. The role of policy documents is to:

- provide a written, contestable benchmark for holding governments to account for their promises
- reveal at least some of the reasoning and planning that lies behind a government strategy or intervention
- provide a window on what progress is being made to roll out policies, once they have been adopted.

Documents that reveal policy intent

When searching for information about a policy, a good starting point is to find out whether the policy has been documented and adopted in a formal way. If so, it is most likely to take the form of a policy statement (sometimes called a white paper) or a law. By studying this kind of policy document you should be able to find out:

- when and why a policy was adopted
- what the policy is intended to achieve
- the principles or beliefs that underpin a policy
- who is expected to implement the policy
- the rules that govern policy implementation.

If there is no formal policy document in relation to a particular issue, this does not mean that no policy exists. But it will make it more difficult to find answers to the questions above and gain a coherent picture of a government's policy intent.

Documents that set out measures for implementation

Policy statements and legislation do not usually go into much detail about how the policy will be implemented. To turn policy intent into practice, governments usually need another layer of documents that are more flexible and action-orientated. In such documents, it is clear what measures a government is putting in place to get results. Documents that set out measures for policy implementation are essential sources of information. They can help you to find out:

- what programmes have been created to implement a policy
- which departments are responsible for the relevant programmes
- what budget programmes are used to channel resources into this policy
- what specifications have been issued to regulate policy implementation
- what targets have been set to see the progress resulting from the policy
- what specific steps are meant to be undertaken to implement this policy.

Policy documents of this kind could include:



Programme plans: Policies are often divided into programmes.

These programmes are then allocated to one or several government departments to work on. The programmes may have different names to the overall policy. Ideally, programme plans should set out how a department or ministry will achieve the aims of a policy.



Budget documents: These important sources reveal how funds are being allocated to and spent on the implementation of policies. In most countries, ministries of finance create ‘line items’ – lines in the overall budget – for different spending programmes. Unfortunately, these do not always correspond with the programmes designed by departments and ministries to implement a policy. So one challenge is to match up how departmental programmes that implement a specific policy are reflected in budget documents.



Regulations: The implementation of a policy is often supported by regulations. These may take the form of norms and standards. For example, if a policy’s intent is to implement basic education services of an adequate quality, regulations may be issued to set out exactly what is meant by ‘adequate quality’. It may specify, for instance, the size of a classroom or the number of pupils per teacher.

Documents that comment on policy performance

It may be that you are setting out to monitor a new policy. On the other hand, it is just as possible that at least some of the policies you are interested in have been in place for some time. If so, you may find a string of documents already commenting on the effectiveness of a policy. Studying documents of this kind can help you to learn:

- who has an interest in monitoring the implementation of a policy
- what achievements and problems have been identified to date
- what actions have been taken to overcome any reported obstacles
- the yardstick or indicators being used to measure progress.

Documents that contain information about policy performance may include:



Government reports: In most countries, government departments have a duty to report on their spending of public resources and on their policy progress. In the case of PRSPs and international human rights treaties, governments are obliged to submit formal progress reports at certain intervals. The content of such reports may give you some indications of what has been undertaken and achieved – or alert

you to absences and weaknesses in the implementation process. It will also show in what format (and against which indicators) government is evaluating its own progress.



Independent evaluations: These are reports written by people outside government, to independently evaluate a policy (or a programme being used to implement a policy). Such evaluations are sometimes initiated by government departments themselves or by donors as a pre-condition to further funding.



Previous monitoring, advocacy and media coverage: The policy you are interested in may have been of interest to other CSOs or stakeholders. There may be statements from interest groups, minutes of parliamentary review meetings or media reports you could use.

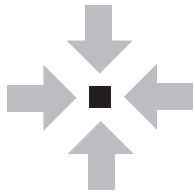


to cut a long story short

The document trail

It is useful to create a record or database of all the documents relating to a policy and to keep it updated. You could group the documents into those dealing with policy aim, actions and where relevant, those reporting on results to date. Sometimes, a lack of documents in one of these categories may in itself be an important factor. For example:

- **Low on strategy:** Some policies have dozens of documents explaining what they intend to achieve – but very few (or none) setting out exactly what actions are to be used for implementation. If this is the case, you already have a strong clue as to why a policy may not get going or is poorly or ineffectively implemented.
- **Low on direction:** If you can find lots of technical and detailed programme documents, but none on policy aims – it may be that there is no guiding strategy holding these programmes together. Again, this could be an important issue to keep in mind when you design your monitoring approach.
- **Low on feedback:** If a policy is already being implemented but there are no documents reporting on this, it is likely that the government’s own monitoring and evaluation processes are weak. In this case, there is probably very little feedback to correct and adjust the implementation process. So there may be a crucial need for evidence of this kind.



interaction

These pages offer some suggestions for facilitating a group discussion on the main themes raised in this chapter.

CHOOSING POLICIES TO MONITOR

1. Learning about the policy landscape
2. Identifying and ranking policies
3. Demystifying policy documents

ACTIVITY 1: LEARNING ABOUT THE POLICY LANDSCAPE

Outcome: Participants have a shared set of terms for discussing different kinds of policies.

Step 1: Introduce the activity by explaining that governments use policies to fulfil many different functions. You could use some of the examples on page 15 to lead this discussion.

Step 2: Invite participants to brainstorm different policy functions relevant in their own context. Adapt the following lead-in phrase and write it up on flip-chart paper: 'In our country/city/district/region/province/town/village, the government uses policies to...'. Ask participants to complete this phrase in as many ways as they can. They should write each policy function on its own card or sheet of paper. Collect their ideas and display them where everyone can see them.

Step 3: Give participants an overview of the different kinds of policies explained on pages 16 and 17.

Step 4: Looking at all the policy functions brainstormed by the group, ask the participants to identify:

- an example of a sectoral policy
- a macro-economic policy
- any institutional policy
- any regulatory policies
- any examples of national development plans
- any examples of multi-national or global policies.

Step 5: Ask participants to rearrange the policy functions they brainstormed in step 2, grouping them into the six broad categories discussed above.

ACTIVITY 2: IDENTIFYING AND RANKING POLICIES

Outcome: Participants have identified and ranked a range of policies that affect the problem or situation they hope to influence.

Step 1: Invite participants to think about the problem or issue they have chosen to focus on. Discuss the following questions as a group:

- What government services – if delivered – would help to address the issue?
- What policies govern the delivery of these services?

Step 2: Working in small groups or all together, identify as many policies or policy areas as you can that are relevant to the problem or issue you want to impact on. TOOL 3 can be used to structure the discussion and capture the suggestions made by the group. At this stage, do not evaluate any of the suggestions; simply list all the ideas that emerge.

Step 3: Use TOOL 4 to rank all the policies you have identified, in terms of the kind of impact they have on the problem/situation.

Step 4: Take a closer look at the policies you placed in boxes 1 and 2. Consider whether it would be possible to group some of these together. Reach consensus on the policies you will monitor by weighing up each option (or combination) against the following criteria:

- How feasible will it be to monitor this policy in an effective way?
- How much capacity and resources does your organisation or network have to tackle this policy?
- Can you access enough information about this policy?
- Do you have the right kind of expertise?
- What networks already exist or could you create any?
- Would you make a difference to the lives of the poor by tackling this policy?

Remember, it is wiser to start with a modest scope of policies and monitor them well than to take on too much at once.

interaction

ACTIVITY 3: DEMYSTIFYING POLICY DOCUMENTS

Outcome: Participants feel more confident about extracting information from policy documents, especially large and formidable ones.

Note: This activity requires a lot of preparation time by the facilitator, but it can be used very effectively, especially where participants have varying levels of experience in handling policy documents.

Step 1: Choose a policy document relevant to your context and ideally one that could easily seem daunting to read, for example a national budget, a law or set of regulations. Before meeting with participants, prepare a handout: extract a few key facts from the document and present these in a simple, easy-to-read format on one page.

Step 2: When meeting with the group, introduce this activity by observing that once you know which policies you want to monitor, the next step is to collect as much information as you can about them. Propose that the most important skill for achieving this is to learn how to extract useful information from sometimes daunting documents.

Step 3: Hand out copies of the document you have chosen to focus on and invite participants to look through it for a few minutes.

Step 4: Then distribute the handout you prepared and work through it with the group. Show where this information was extracted from in the original document.

Step 5: Consider the task ahead of collecting information about the policy or policies you have chosen to monitor. If appropriate, discuss whether you can locate:

- documents that reveal policy intent
- documents that set out measures for implementation
- documents that comment on policy progress or performance.

Step 6: Decide how you will divide up the task of collecting policy information and how you will check in and assist one another if you meet any obstacles in accessing the documents you need.

RECAP



Chapter 2: Choosing policies to monitor

By now you should have:

- selected the policy or policies you want to monitor
- collected available documents about your chosen policies.

The next steps are to:

- ➔ identify the stakeholders of the policy you have chosen to monitor
- ➔ consider which stakeholders will be the target audience for your evidence
- ➔ decide which stakeholders may be partners for your policy monitoring work.

Chapter 3 can assist you to complete these steps.

IDENTIFYING POLICY STAKEHOLDERS

3

This chapter aims to consider the stakeholders that shape government policies, implement them and influence their future direction. As discussed in Unit 1.1, the term stakeholder as used in this toolkit refers to all the people – men, women, boys and girls – who have influence over, and are affected by policies. This consists of:

- the government, which has the formal mandate to make, implement and enforce policies
- all the individuals, organisations and agencies that play a role in designing, implementing and evaluating the policy, and
- all the people who experience benefits or harm as a result of a policy being in place.

The chapter explores the following questions:

- Who are the stakeholders of a policy?
- Who will you have to influence in order to change future policy directions?
- Who could you work with to gather and analyse evidence, and to advocate for change?
- Who will you inform, mobilise and try to influence with your findings?

You will come across the following tools in this chapter:

TOOL 5: STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

TOOL 6: MAPPING PARTNERS AND TARGET AUDIENCES

TOOL 7: NETWORK AGREEMENT

On the interaction pages, you will find some group activities for discussing policy stakeholders in your context. They will help you to:

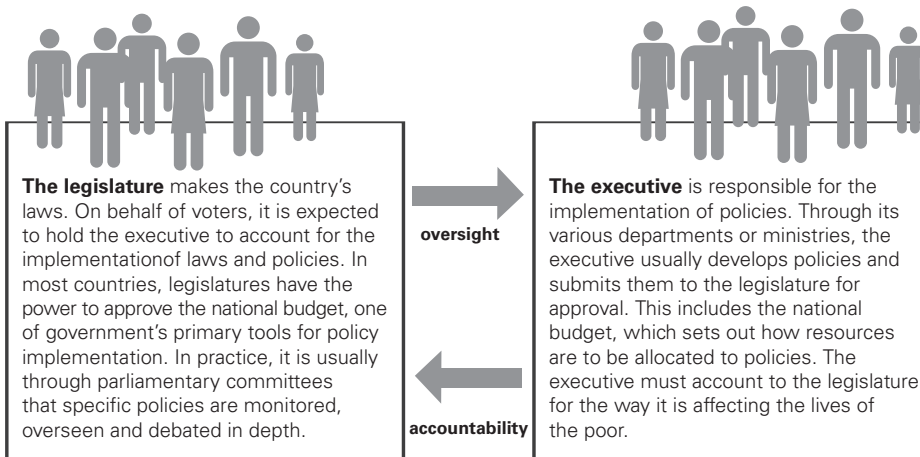
- brainstorm, to identify the stakeholders of a policy
- identify target audiences for your evidence, and
- uncover potential partners who could contribute to your policy monitoring.

Unit 3.1 Stakeholders of government policies

The aim of this unit is to give an overview of different kinds of policy stakeholders.

Stakeholders within government

In the case of most policies, it is not very useful to think of the government as a single stakeholder. This is because different parts of the government are involved with policies at different levels, in different ways and at different stages. There are often tensions within government departments or ministries, as well as diverse interests and agendas. These all affect the way policies are designed and implemented. For example, a planner working in a national department's head office might have different ideas about a policy than someone involved in the frontline of delivering services – such as a teacher. Policy stakeholders with diverse interests may be found in any of the three broad arms of government: the legislatures, the executive and the judiciary. For the purposes of this toolkit, the relationship between the legislatures and the executive is especially important:



There may also be any number of other institutions with an interest in policy implementation. For example:

- The **auditor-general**, in most countries, must ensure that public funds are being managed and accounted for in an honest and transparent way.
- A **national statistics office** or service is usually responsible for recording, analysing and providing data to support policy planning and implementation.
- **Commissions and boards** may have the responsibility to oversee particular cross-cutting issues (such as human rights) or provide support to specific sectors (such as energy or agriculture).

How to work with parliamentary committees

Members of parliament generally do not have time to look deeply into the implications of every single policy in a country. This work is often done through parliamentary committees. Without a strong committee system, it is impossible for parliament to be effective and informed in holding the executive to account. Parliamentary committees in many developing countries are under-resourced and often have few resources available for research and monitoring. If a relevant committee exists in your country with a stake in the policy you are monitoring, they may have a keen interest in the evidence from your monitoring work. Such evidence can assist them to perform their own function of providing parliament with reliable and sound information on the outcome and impact of policies.

Who are the stakeholders outside government?

Outside government, some of the main stakeholders to consider include the following:

- The **beneficiaries** or intended beneficiaries of policies clearly have an interest in the effective implementation of a policy.
- **Those excluded from or harmed** by policy implementation can also be seen as stakeholders, as they could benefit from a review and change in policy.
- The **public** are stakeholders of policy implementation in the sense that they have the right to know how the government is using their country's resources to combat poverty and improve people's livelihoods.
- **Civil society organisations** may be stakeholders of a policy. As citizens they have the right to monitor their government's policies. They may have been involved in the formulation, implementation and/or monitoring and evaluation of certain policies. International CSOs may also have a keen interest in policies that fall within their focal areas or which they have contributed to.
- The **media** is an extremely important category of stakeholders to consider. Journalists in particular can play a critical role in drawing attention to and disseminating information about policy issues.
- The **private sector** may have a stake in policy implementation, especially if the policy has (or intends to have) an effect on employment, economic stability and skills development.
- **Donors and IFIs** are powerful policy stakeholders. Their influence may be more overt in the policy development process and less direct during policy implementation. Yet the implementation of policies can be deeply affected when funds flowing from aid and loan agreements are not released in time (or not at all, due to governments not meeting donor conditions).



to cut a long
story short

Why is it important to pay attention to stakeholders?

There are at least two important reasons to identify different kinds of stakeholders:

- You are seeking people who can make a difference in the policy area you are interested in. These are individuals or organisations that have power over the policy process and/or have the ability to make or influence decisions about future policy directions. It is essential to identify these stakeholders as they represent the target audience you want to influence with the results of your monitoring work. Be aware of stakeholders who may have the power to block your advocacy efforts.
- You also want to pinpoint people who can assist and support your monitoring work. This may include organisations, networks or individuals that you could team up with to undertake this work. It is also useful to identify key people who may not be involved directly in monitoring, but can assist you in getting access to information, to other stakeholders and to opportunities for gathering evidence or presenting your findings. Such people are sometimes described as gatekeepers, because they can 'let you in' to places that you may find difficult to access on your own.

Unit 3.2 Target audiences and partners

This unit presents tools for identifying two important sets of stakeholders in your own context. They are:

- the decision makers and other powerful stakeholders you will need to influence with the evidence flowing from your monitoring work, and
- individuals and organisations you could team up with as partners.

Who are the target audiences?

When you gather evidence about a policy, it is important to keep in mind who you will ultimately present that evidence to, and why. The evidence should influence specific people: especially those who have the power to change a policy or improve the way a policy is being implemented. They represent the primary target audience that you want to influence when monitoring relevant policies. This includes the men and women who have **direct** decision-making power over the content and implementation of policies. It also includes those who have more **indirect** influence, such as:

- advisors who inform the decision makers
- those who are in a relationship of trust and confidence with decision makers
- people who have influence behind the scenes
- those who exert pressure on decision makers, including the people who are affected by policies.

Who are potential partners?

As explained in unit 1.3, policy monitoring usually benefits from a team approach in which various organisations can contribute different skills, areas of expertise, contacts and networks. For the monitoring process to proceed smoothly, it is usually a good idea to clarify the nature of the relationships you enter into and where appropriate, formalise them. Keep in mind that different forms of cooperation may be suitable for different stakeholders, for example:

- formal partnerships or network agreements
- informal partnership or periodic/task-specific cooperation
- informal and unofficial understanding of mutual goodwill/willingness to exchange information.

There are many different guides and tools available for exploring and analysing stakeholder relationships. Only two are presented here. Please see the *Dig Deeper* icon in this unit for further suggestions.



dig deeper

Find out more about stakeholder analysis from:

- <http://tilz.tearfund.org/Publications/ROOTS/Advocacy+toolkit.htm>
- www.chronicpoverty.org/CPToolbox/Resources.htm#Stakeholderanalysis
- www.parcinfo.org/documents/PARC%20Products/Participatory%20Evaluation.doc
- www.enterprise-impact.org.uk/informationresources/toolbox/stakeholderanalysis.shtml


TOOL 5: STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Aim: To identify and analyse the stakeholders of a policy.

Context: This tool can be used individually or with a group. It is particularly useful with groups in which participants may have knowledge of different sets of stakeholders and you want to gain a common overview.

How to use this tool:

Step 1: Using a table, like the one below, list all the stakeholders of the policy you are working with in the left-hand column (your table is likely to have many more entries than the simplified example here). See the *Keywords box* for definitions of the different categories of stakeholders.

Step 2: In the second column from the left, indicate what the stakeholder's **interest** is in the policy at issue. Set down, briefly, why they have a 'stake' in what happens with this policy.

Step 3: In the third column from the left, indicate for each stakeholder what level of **agreement** there is between your views on this policy and theirs. Circle either a L (low), M (medium) or H (high) in the column to match your level of agreement. For example, if your views on a policy are different from those of the stakeholder, you would circle L for low levels of agreement.

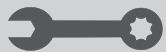
Step 4: In the next column across, again circle a L, M or H to indicate how **important** this policy is to each of the stakeholders. For example, an education policy may be high in importance to teachers, but only of medium importance to nurses (in the sense that many of them may be parents of children at school).

Step 5: In the final column on the right, indicate how much **influence** each stakeholder may have over the policy. Again, circle one of the letters to show whether, in your view, the stakeholder has low, medium or high levels of influence over the policy.

Example:

Stakeholders of the District Food Aid Programme	What interest do they have in this policy?	The level of agreement between us	How important is the policy to them?	How much influence do they have?
Vulnerable stakeholders				
Children in VKN district	They need access to food	L M H	L M H	L M H
Local poor households	Can't provide for their children	L M H	L M H	L M H
Powerful stakeholders				
Minister of Agriculture	Responsible for food aid	L M H	L M H	L M H
District councillor X	Elected on a promise to improve access to food	L M H	L M H	L M H
Implementing stakeholders				
Municipal coordinator	Has a duty to oversee roll-out	L M H	L M H	L M H
Local food suppliers	Employment opportunities	L M H	L M H	L M H
Knowledgeable stakeholders				
District statistical officer	Has/wants data on hunger	L M H	L M H	L M H
Health Action Group	Is trusted by communities	L M H	L M H	L M H
Other affected stakeholders				
Donors	Have funded the programme	L M H	L M H	L M H
Commercial farmers	Supply crops	L M H	L M H	L M H

Source: Adapted from Graham Gordon, *Practical Action for Advocacy*, Tearfund: Teddington (2002) and Linda Mayoux, *Between Tyranny and Utopia: Participatory Evaluation for Pro-Poor Development*, Performance Assessment Resource Centre (Birmingham, 2005).



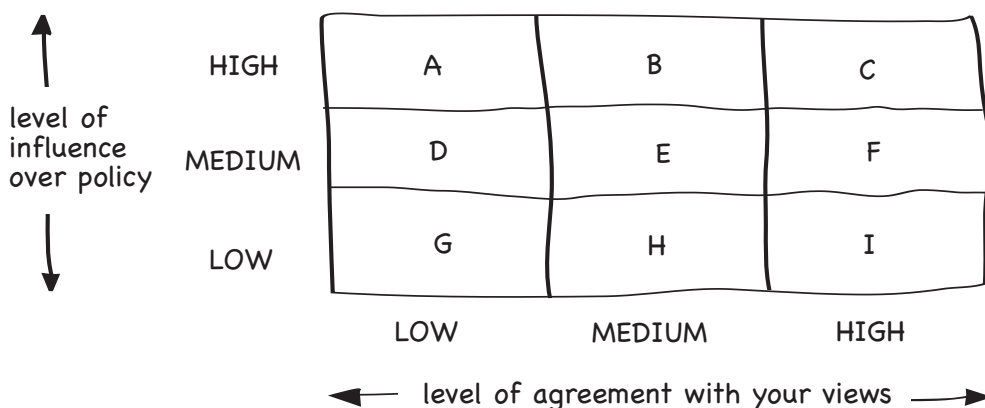
TOOL 6: MAPPING PARTNERS AND TARGET AUDIENCES

Aim: To identify target audiences and possible partners for your policy monitoring work.

Context: This tool can be used individually or with a group. To use this tool, you should already have identified a list of stakeholders for a given policy.

How to use this tool:

Step 1: Draw a matrix like the one below (without numbering the squares).



Step 2: Consider each policy stakeholder you have identified in turn. For each one, clarify:

- how much influence they have over the policy, and
- what level of agreement there is between you and them when it comes to your views about the policy.

Step 3: Write the name of each stakeholder onto the matrix, deciding in which of the nine blocks you think they belong. For example, if you feel a stakeholder has a lot of influence over the policy, you would place them somewhere towards the top of the matrix. If you think a stakeholder holds very different views from your own about the policy, you would place them somewhere on the left-hand side of the matrix.

Step 4: Once you have placed all the stakeholders, analyse the pattern that has emerged. You will find that:

- the stakeholders in squares C, F and I represent potential partners. You may need to inform and mobilise some of them to help you gather and analyse evidence, or to support you to advocate for change
- those in square C are very important. They could be partners or gatekeepers
- those in squares A and B (and possibly E) represent the powerful stakeholders you will need to influence through your advocacy. Among these, those in square A are most likely to oppose or resist your advocacy message.

Step 5: Against this background, make a list of:

- specific people who represent the target audience for your policy monitoring work
- stakeholders who could play an important role as part of your advocacy base
- stakeholders you could team up with as partners.

Sources: Adapted from Graham Gordon, *Practical Action for Advocacy*, Tearfund (Teddington, 2002), and *Materials for Training Programme on Advocacy and Policy Influencing*, Christian Relief and Development Association Training Centre (Ethiopia, undated).



key words

Kinds of stakeholders

In every context, every policy has its own unique combination of stakeholders.

Here are some different kinds of stakeholders to think about:

Vulnerable stakeholders are those who are most deeply affected by the successes and failures of a policy, or by being excluded from policy benefits.

Powerful stakeholders are those who have influence over policy implementation and are affected by its outcomes. Some may have an interest in seeing a policy succeed, while others may have reasons to obstruct or undermine it.

Implementing stakeholders are those who play a critical role in the implementation of policies. Their power is usually in the everyday routine decisions and actions that form part of implementation.

Knowledgeable stakeholders are those who may influence the policy process by providing (or withholding) information and skills. They may belong to any of the other stakeholder categories or they may be independent informants, researchers or experts.

Other affected stakeholders are those who are likely to be directly or indirectly affected by the policy, but who are neither very vulnerable nor powerful.

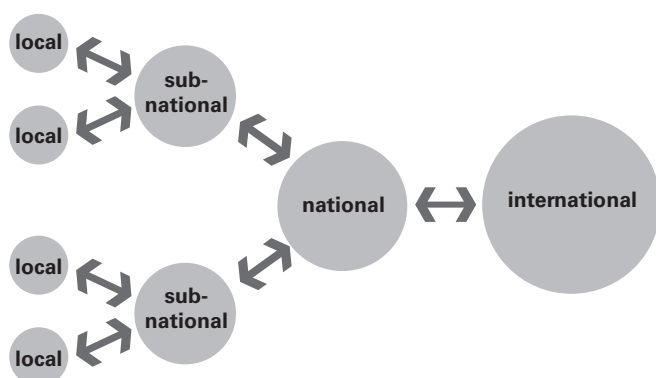
Unit 3.3 Monitoring by a network of stakeholders

The aim of this unit is to take a closer look at ways of building networks of stakeholders. It considers two options, a sector-based star network and a monitoring chain.



Sector-based star network

The structure that works best to support a monitoring network will depend on the nature of the organisations involved, their relative capacity and the policies they have chosen to monitor. The star network works well when a range of organisations specialising in different sectors come together to monitor a range of policies and generate a shared advocacy message. So for example, three or four organisations might cooperate to monitor different policies that all have a bearing on women's safety.



Monitoring chains

Another option is to match up organisations that can monitor a policy at different levels of government, thereby enhancing their monitoring efforts. For example, imagine there are a number of CSOs able to monitor the implementation of a new education policy at the local level. Yet none of them, on their own, is able to gather evidence on a larger scale, or draw conclusions about the broader effects of the policy. Within a monitoring chain, each local CSO passes on the evidence it gathers to the next level, perhaps a district or provincial monitoring project. Here again, evidence from several districts or provinces is collated and passed on to a national network or coordinating body. In this way, individual CSOs are able to catalyse their strengths and build a collective body of evidence. This evidence can then be used for advocacy at the local, sub-national, national and even international level.



case study

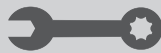
Community-based policy analysis in Ghana

In 2003, a project in Ghana investigated trade policy from the perspective of those who experience its impact most acutely: low-income producers, traders and consumers of agricultural products. The project drew on the strengths of different stakeholders at different levels. At the national level, two CSOs played a critical role – namely the SEND Foundation of West Africa and the Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC).

In order to bring low-income producers, traders and consumers into the monitoring process, the next step was to identify community-based partner NGOs in all three of Ghana's ecological zones. These NGOs worked closely with the project's research officer to mobilise and involve local stakeholders. In this way, two communities were selected in each zone to participate in the research process. The findings from the research at all six sites were then channelled back to stakeholders at community, national and international levels.

Source: Claire Melamed, Jennie Richmond, Issah Mohammed and Siapha Kamara, *Talking Trade: Communities Making Trade Policy in Ghana*, Christian Aid and SEND Foundation (London, 2003). www.christian-aid.org/indepth/311talkingtrade/index.htm

Building a network of organisations to further your monitoring objectives can be a challenging task. It means creating and maintaining relationships of trust between multiple players who often have diverse needs, capacities and interests. It also calls for strong management skills to coordinate activities, facilitate joint ownership and decision making, manage conflict and foster ongoing alignment among stakeholders.



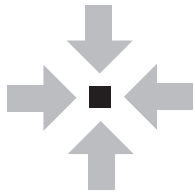
TOOL 7: A NETWORK AGREEMENT

Aim: To create a clear and detailed agreement for cooperation of your network.

Context: This is a useful tool to consider when you want to boost your potential to work together effectively as a network. An agreement can be developed collaboratively with the various stakeholders contributing to and commenting on the contents. It can then be formalised and signed by all members as an indication of their commitment to it.

Key points that should be clarified in a network agreement include:

1. **network objectives:** the concrete objectives your network agrees to work towards achieving
2. **guiding principles:** the basic principles all members agree to uphold and advance
3. **decision making:** how decisions will be made and the different levels and methods of decision making
4. **coordination:** who will coordinate the network and what decisions lie within and beyond their mandate
5. **roles:** precise roles for each member of the network
6. **delegation:** procedures to ensure clear and fair delegation of tasks
7. **authority:** who has the authority to do what
8. **accountability:** who is accountable to whom
9. **reporting:** who reports to whom and procedures to ensure reporting happens as and when it should
10. **financial matters:** who is responsible for financial management and accountability and the rules that apply to dealing with funds
11. **conflict:** how to deal with conflict among members
12. **conduct:** a code of conduct for practices and forms of behaviour for meetings and other interaction between members
13. **recourse:** what action will be taken if the agreement is breached.
14. **review:** how and when you will review your cooperation and adjust the agreement if necessary



interaction

These pages offer some suggestions for facilitating a group discussion on the main themes raised in this chapter.

POLICY STAKEHOLDERS

1. Brainstorming and listing stakeholders
2. Who are our target audiences?
3. Exploring partnership options

ACTIVITY 1: BRAINSTORMING AND LISTING STAKEHOLDERS

Outcome: Participants have identified a range of stakeholders inside and outside government who have power over or are influenced by a policy you have chosen to monitor.

Step 1: Suggest that most government policies have multiple stakeholders, some of which are inside government and some outside. Explain that the group will be brainstorming these stakeholders in turn.

Step 2: Take a closer look at the stakeholders within government that influence and affect the policy or policies you are interested in. Create a table like the one below and apply the questions it contains to your own context. Record the stakeholders identified by the group.

Step 3: Discuss the stakeholders outside government that have influence over or are affected by the policy you have decided to monitor.

Step 4: Introduce and discuss the different categories of stakeholders outlined in the Keywords box in Unit 3.2. If appropriate, invite participants to group the stakeholders they have identified so far under these headings and to add any more they think of in the process.

Step 5: Use TOOL 5 and TOOL 6 to analyse and rank the stakeholders.

Step 6: Conclude this activity by making two lists:

- a list of powerful stakeholders to target with your findings
- a list of potential partners to involve in your policy monitoring work and advocacy.

	Legislature	Executive	Other
National level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which members of parliament have a stake in this policy? • Which parliamentary committees have an interest in how this policy is progressing? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which national decision-makers play a key role in the implementation of this policy? • Which national departments and officials have an impact on policy implementation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the judiciary have an interest in this policy? • Are there any other state and semi-state institutions at national level? • Could any of these be seen as stakeholders of this policy?
Sub-national and local levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What elected bodies exist at sub-national and local levels? • Which members of provincial, district or local structures have an interest in the success or failure of this policy? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which specific departments or agencies will be involved in the implementation of this policy? • Which sub-national and local officials have an influence over implementation? • Which government employees (for example in schools or clinics) have vested interest in this policy? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there state or semi-state institutions at sub-national and local level implementation? • Who is responsible for regulating and enforcing the policy? • Who in government records or analyses data relating to this policy?

ACTIVITY 2: WHO ARE OUR TARGET AUDIENCES?

Outcome: Participants are clear about who they will need to influence through their policy monitoring work.

Step 1: Talk about the importance of evidence. Invite participants to describe what kind of evidence they think will catch the attention of powerful stakeholders.

Step 2: Divide participants into smaller groups if appropriate. Ask them to discuss the following questions:

- Who do you want to influence with your policy monitoring work? Make a list of specific people you will target.

interaction

- Who else should know about the evidence you gather? Make a list of stakeholders you want to inform to strengthen your advocacy base.
- What outcomes do you hope to achieve by engaging with stakeholders?
- What kind of evidence will have the most influence on the stakeholders you have identified?

Step 3: Ask the small groups to report their ideas back to the larger group. Reach consensus on the answers to each of the questions. You should agree on:

- the specific stakeholders you want to influence, inform and mobilise as part of your advocacy strategy
- what you expect each of these stakeholders to gain as a result of your policy monitoring.

ACTIVITY 3: EXPLORING PARTNERSHIP OPTIONS

Outcome : Participants have identified potential partners to draw into their policy monitoring work and have some preliminary ideas on what role each could play.

Step 1: Facilitate a group discussion on the various forms of cooperation that are possible. Describe/draw an example of the star network and chain of monitoring. If appropriate, discuss the case study from Ghana that appears in unit 3.3. Pose the following question:

How do you want to work together with different stakeholders to organise your policy monitoring activities?

Step 2: Looking at your list of stakeholders, decide as a group which ones would be able to help you to:

- gather evidence
- analyse evidence, and
- undertake advocacy to influence future policy?

Step 3: Decide which of the stakeholders on your list may be:

- individuals or organisations that could play a role in a formal network or partnership
- individuals or organisations that you could cooperate with on a less formal basis
- gatekeepers who could facilitate access to information and other powerful stakeholders.

Step 4: Use a table or matrix like the one below to capture your ideas:

Stakeholder	Level of operation	Specific contributions	With which part of the project could they assist us?	Potential relationship to the project
Mr D Diduza Office of the Director General of Education	Provincial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knowledge of government data systems • access to the Director General 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gathering evidence • advocacy 	gatekeeper
Primary Education Action Group Contact person: Ms A Katunga	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • existing contacts with schools • knowledge of education policy • experience in mobilising public awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gathering evidence • analysing evidence • advocacy 	formal partner

Step 5: Decide how to investigate these potential relationships further. In most cases, it would make sense to first approach those you would like to cultivate the most formal relationship with. For example, you could host a meeting with potential partners to explore the possibility of a network. TOOL 7 can be used to develop a formal network or partnership agreement.

RECAP



Chapter 3: Who are the policy stakeholders?

By now you should have:

- identified the stakeholders of the policies you have chosen to monitor
- decided which stakeholders are the target audience for your monitoring work
- singled out which stakeholders you can work with to build a monitoring network or team.

The next steps are to:

- ➡ find out more about the content of the policy you are monitoring
- ➡ define your monitoring objectives
- ➡ decide what kinds of evidence you will need to gather
- ➡ choose indicators to track in relation to a policy
- ➡ establish a baseline for your monitoring work.

Chapter 4 offers information and ideas to undertake these tasks.

LOOKING INTO A POLICY AND **SETTING** **YOUR FOCUS**

4

This chapter aims to introduce ideas and tools to help you plan what evidence you will need to gather to monitor a policy. Before you measure the impact of a policy, you need to know how that policy works and what its objectives are. Only then can you decide what kind evidence you need and what indicators will help you to gather it. It will explore the following questions:

- What assumptions are built into the policy?
- Who stands to win or lose from the policy?
- What aspects of the policy are critical to monitor?
- What kinds of evidence will you gather about policy implementation?
- What are indicators and how are they used to monitor progress?
- What is a baseline and how can you set one for your policy monitoring?

The chapter includes the following tools:

TOOL 8: CHAIN OF ASSUMPTIONS

TOOL 9: POLICY CALENDAR

TOOL 10: POLICY PERSPECTIVES

TOOL 11: MATCHING OBJECTIVES TO EVIDENCE

TOOL 12: DATA CHECK

The interaction pages provide activities to explore the themes raised in this chapter in your own organisation or network. They will help you to:

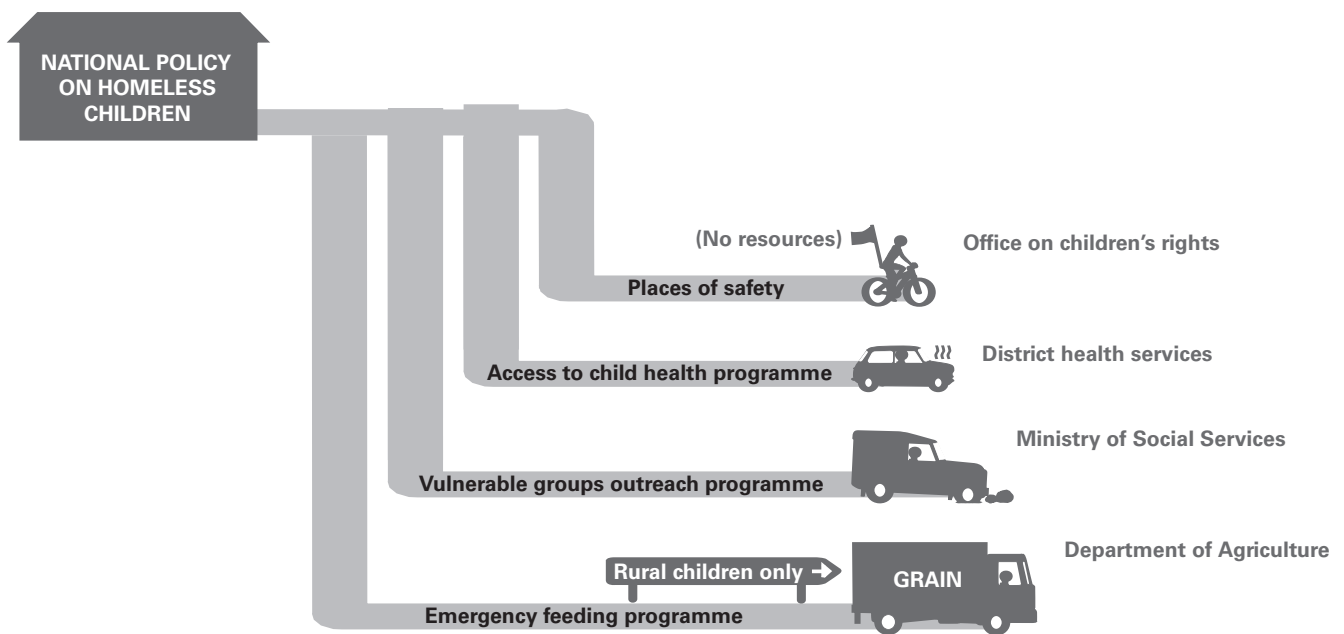
- identify which aspects of a policy you will monitor
- define your monitoring objectives
- consider what kinds of evidence you will gather, and
- choose indicators to track policy implementation.

Unit 4.1 Analysing the content of a policy

This unit aims to look at ways of examining a policy in depth. The challenge here is to look at the policy from the government’s point of view and to unravel how the policy is meant to work. This will give you a sense of the assumptions and risks that underpin a policy.

Which activities are driving the policies?

It is essential to establish what actions a government is planning to implement a particular policy. It is ultimately these actions that you will monitor to gather evidence about the results of the policy. For example, if you have decided to monitor a government’s policy on street children, you may find activities being driven by different government departments and agencies. In order to monitor the policy, you will need to be aware of – and possibly choose between – the most critical.



Who stands to benefit or lose from the policy?

To understand government’s strategy, it is also important to see who they are targeting and how it intends to reach them. It is also useful to investigate where a policy ignores, or could be detrimental to, particular sectors of society. The key question here is: What does the policy promise to whom and who will benefit and lose in the process?

Who are the policy beneficiaries?

The success of a policy often depends on how well it targets those it intends to help. For instance, a school feeding policy may have the stated aim of improving the nutritional status of vulnerable children. However, if vulnerable children are absent from school more often than others, and the benefits then fall to children who are not equally in need of nutritional support, the policy will not meet its aims.

Direct and indirect beneficiaries

Any policy can have direct and indirect beneficiaries. For example, the elderly primarily or directly benefit from a policy providing them with free healthcare. While the policy does not target household members who live with (or are cared for by) older people directly, they are likely to benefit from the policy.

Who is adversely affected by a policy?

Many policies adversely affect people who are not even considered or named within policy documents. For example, a policy geared towards improving the electricity supply in a country would seem, in theory, to promise benefits for all. Yet the way it achieves its objectives could involve privatisation or other strategies that bring job losses and push up the price of electricity for consumers.

When policy-makers design a policy, they usually have to make some assumptions about how people will behave and react to their interventions. Most policies contain an assumed chain of cause and effect. The following tool provides a way to chart some of the main assumptions about inputs, outputs and outcomes that underpin a policy.



TOOL 8: CHAIN OF ASSUMPTIONS

Aim: To look at the assumptions policy-makers have made about how the policy will improve peoples' lives and to assess whether their assumptions are logical and sound.

Context: This tool can be used individually or with a group. It is likely to require intermittent time for research. This tool requires relatively detailed information about how a government plans to implement a policy or programme. Such information could be extracted from policy documents and/or gathered through interviews with relevant government officials. How much time would be needed to use this tool will depend on the complexity of the policy in question and the depth of research required.

How to use this tool

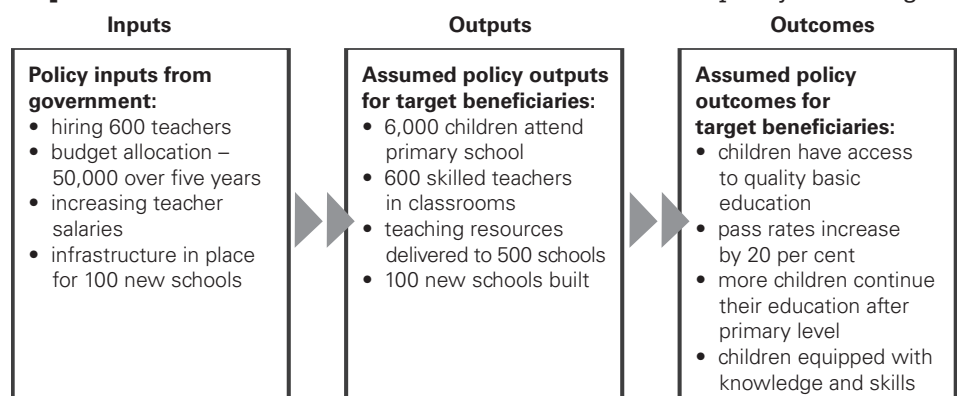
Step 1: Ensure that everyone participating in the use of this tool is familiar with the terms inputs, outputs and outcomes. Explain that these terms provide a useful way to think about cause and effect in a policy implementation process.

Step 2: Using available policy information as a basis, identify what **inputs** government is making (or planning to make) for the implementation of the policy. How much, in broad terms, is it planning to spend? What other resources is it planning to make available for the implementation of this policy? If necessary, interview relevant government officials.

Step 3: Extract from available documents (or interviews with officials) exactly what **outputs** government is promising to deliver. It is important to be as specific as possible in describing and quantifying these outputs.

Step 4: Next, try to pinpoint exactly what **outcomes** government is promising to bring about for target beneficiaries. Such information may be contained in documents that reflect policy intent (see unit 2.4) or in the strategic plans of relevant government departments.

Step 5: Use a chart like the one below to summarise and compare your findings:



Looking at the inputs listed, does it make sense to assume that these inputs will lead to the promised outputs? Can the outputs be seen to lead logically to the desired outcomes? In the example below, for instance, you might notice that no specific inputs are listed that would necessarily lead to better *quality* education for the target beneficiaries. It is also not clear why these beneficiaries would enjoy higher pass rates and continue their education past the primary level.

Step 6: Make a list of all the 'missing links' you can spot in the government's policy design. This should help you focus on which aspects of the policy it may be most crucial to monitor.

What should happen when during policy implementation?

Analysing the content of a policy also gives you an opportunity to learn as much as you can about the activities a government is undertaking to implement a policy – and the time frames to do this. The following tool can be used to record your findings.



TOOL 9: POLICY CALENDAR

Aim: To draw up a calendar of the main events and activities being used to implement a policy. This will help you identify important deadlines and advocacy opportunities.

Context: This tool can be used individually or with a group. It requires quite detailed information about the implementation plans associated with the policy or programme in question. If participants already have this knowledge or have easy access to such information, the activity should not take long. If the required policy information is more complex or obscure, more time will be needed to conduct research into the government's implementation plans.

How to use this tool

Step 1: Decide on a time period to cover on your policy calendar. This could be the time period during which you are planning to monitor the policy, the lifespan of the policy itself, or whatever time period makes sense given your circumstances and context.

Step 2: Photocopy the pages of a blank month-by-month calendar to match the time period you have chosen. Alternatively, create your own with pen and paper.

Step 3: Put your calendar pages together in the form of a wall-chart or month-by-month diary. You now have a blank schedule to record everything you find out about the planned policy activities and time frames.

Step 4: Using available policy documents and/or interviews with officials as a basis, mark on your calendar the key dates and phases of the policy implementation process. For example, if the implementation process has been divided into phases, mark each phase in a different colour or border. Indicate, for instance, the dates by when:

- departments are meant to plan, budget for and begin implementing a new policy
- budget resources are meant to be allocated to a policy and its associated programmes
- any development of infrastructure or staffing is meant to be completed
- systems are meant to be set in place for policy implementation
- goods and services are meant to be delivered
- the policy is meant to be reported on and evaluated.

The more detail you can include on your calendar the more useful it will be to you.

Step 5: Looking at your policy calendar, identify and clearly flag the following:

- Which periods of policy implementation will it be most critical for you to monitor?
- Which phases or events provide the best opportunities for you to present evidence and influence the future of the policy?

Unit 4.2 Defining your monitoring objectives

This unit aims to emphasise the importance of defining objectives for your monitoring work and demonstrate why it is important to know exactly what information you need to gather about a policy. It is not possible to monitor everything about a policy. You have to be selective. The challenge is to identify which aspects or parts of a policy it would be most crucial to monitor.

Pinpointing the questions you want to ask

Good monitoring objectives derive from stating clearly what questions you will ask and answer through your monitoring work:

- One way to springboard the process is simply to list all the questions you find worth asking about a policy and then to select those that seem most urgent to address.
- It may also be useful to think of questions, in turn, about the efficiency and effectiveness of a policy:

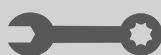
Efficiency is about 'doing things right'.

Questions about the efficiency of a policy would look at whether it is being implemented correctly: according to procedures, without wasting time and money, fairly and transparently, etc.

Effectiveness is about 'doing the right things'.

Questions about the effectiveness of a policy focus attention on whether the right kinds of programmes are being used for roll-out, whether the right beneficiaries have been targeted, etc.

- Another option is to ask questions from different perspectives. For example, you could ask questions to explore the gender dimensions of a policy or its environmental implications. Tool 10 provides a way to raise questions about the way a policy affects people.



TOOL 10: POLICY PERSPECTIVES

Aim: To identify possible monitoring questions by looking at a policy from the point of view of those affected by it.

Context: This tool can be used individually or with a group. It can be particularly useful for generating questions with participants who are close to/knowledgeable about the target beneficiaries or others affected by a policy.

How to use this tool with a group

Step 1: Draw up a table like the one opposite, but leave more space in each row. Feel free to adjust or add to the questions in the left-hand column to suit your own policy choice and context. You could photocopy the table you have prepared and hand these out to participants or draw one up on a flip-chart.

Step 2: Explain to participants that the left-hand column is all about government's perspective on the policy. Invite the participants to use available information about the policy to fill in answers to the questions in this column.

Step 3: Facilitate a brief discussion on what the participants have found out about the questions in the left-hand column. Field any questions of clarification and note important gaps in available information.

Step 4: Now ask the participants (in pairs or small groups) to think about the policy from the point of view of those affected by it. For each of the themes raised on the left, invite them to note down as many questions as they can in the right-hand column. An example is given in the first row.



Looking at the policy from the government's point of view	What questions are raised when looking at the policy from the point of view of those affected by it?
What are the aims and objectives of the policy?	Do government's aims match what people expect or need from this policy?
Who are the intended beneficiaries of the policy?	
Which role-players and institutions are meant to implement the policy?	
What quantity and nature of goods and services are meant to be provided via the policy?	
What quality are these goods and services meant to adhere to?	
What improvements is this policy meant to make to peoples' lives?	

Step 5: Invite the pairs or small groups to feedback on the questions they have generated and display these in a joint list. When you compare the two columns, what important tensions and contradictions do you notice? Ask them to read through all the questions and reach consensus on those it would be most useful to pursue in their monitoring work.

Setting your monitoring objectives

Once you have identified the questions you want to ask about a policy, it is easy to re-state these as monitoring objectives. For example:

Question you want to ask about a policy	Re-formulated as a monitoring objective
Will people lose their jobs as a result of this policy?	Our objective is to track how many people lose their jobs as a result of this policy over a one-year period

It is often suggested that good objectives need to be SMART. SMART objectives are widely used by many international agencies, donors, CSOs and development practitioners to ensure your objectives are:

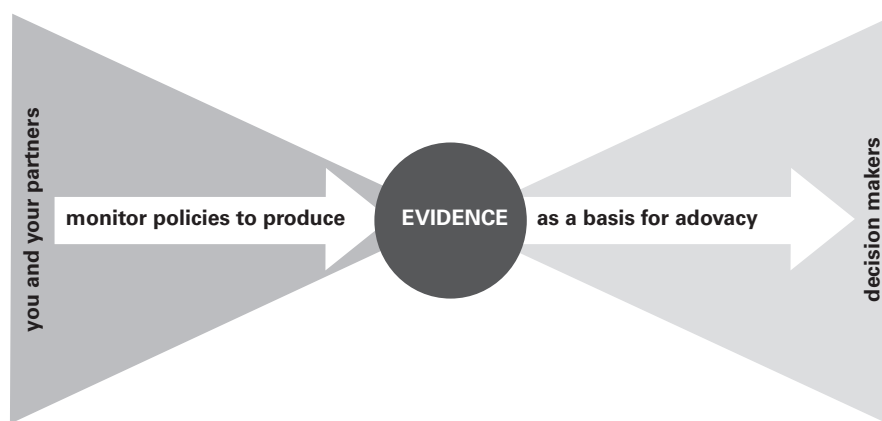
- Specific:** that their meaning is clear
- Measurable:** that they can be measured
- Achievable:** that they are realistic enough to be achieved
- Relevant:** that they are suited to the outcomes you want to achieve
- Time-bound:** showing an expected time for achieving a certain result.

The table below gives some examples of monitoring objectives that meet the SMART requirements – and don't:

SMART	Yes	No
Specific	Our objective is to monitor the training of government staff as set out in the National Human Resource Development Programme run by the Ministry of Labour...	Our objective is to monitor government's human resource policy...
Measurable	...to establish whether 15 per cent of staff are undergoing skills development as set out in the policy	...to see how well it is being implemented
Achievable	Our objective is to monitor the policy in 20 out of the 100 district offices....	Our objective is to monitor the policy across government offices....
Relevant	...in order to gather evidence on the quality and duration of all staff training initiatives...	...in order to check whether procedures are being followed...
Time-bound	...between April and September 2007.	...over the forthcoming period.

Unit 4.3 What kind of evidence do you need?

This unit aims to examine why evidence is central to policy monitoring work and to introduce some useful terms for talking about evidence. The type of work being discussed in this toolkit is sometimes called evidence-based advocacy. This name quite rightly underlines the fact that the main purpose of monitoring is to generate evidence to advocate for positive change.



It is important to think about *the kind of evidence* that will make powerful stakeholders sit up and listen. Are they likely to be swayed by facts and figures? Will personal accounts from people living in poverty carry more weight? Is your audience sensitive to public opinion from a particular geographic or social group? Tackling these kinds of questions will influence the tools you choose to gather and analyse evidence.

Quantitative and qualitative evidence

There are two main ways of capturing information as evidence:

- **Quantitative evidence** is captured in the form of numbers. For example, quantitative evidence about the implementation of an HIV and AIDS policy could include data on prevalence rates, infection rates and numbers of people receiving treatment. Quantitative evidence aims to be objective, verifiable and measurable.
- **Qualitative evidence** is expressed in the form of words or images. It generally aims to explore or convey ideas, opinions, perspectives, experiences, feelings and insights. For instance, qualitative evidence about the implementation of an HIV and AIDS policy could include personal accounts of the obstacles to treatment or records from a group discussion with young people on sexual behaviour.

Sources of evidence

You will probably find it useful to combine evidence from different sources to construct a powerful advocacy message. Sources of information are usually divided into two main categories:

- **Primary sources** give you original, first-hand information that has not been analysed or interpreted. For example, primary sources of information about child labour could include raw data on numbers of children or types of labour, or first-hand accounts from children or adults recording their experiences or opinions.

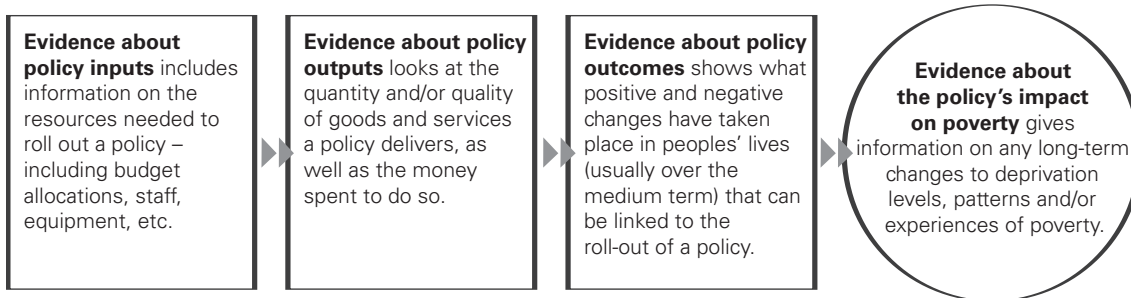
The best of both worlds

Ideally, both quantitative and qualitative evidence could be used in monitoring policies. If gathered correctly, quantitative evidence will allow you to draw more general conclusions. Qualitative evidence, on the other hand, usually adds depth and meaning to your work. The ideal is to use a combination of methods to gather both types of evidence and then compare the findings from each. This practice is usually called 'triangulation'. Yet there is no need to adopt multiple methods if your capacity doesn't allow it. A well-conducted study using a single, clear-cut method is better than no study at all.

- **Secondary sources** provide information that has been edited, analysed, or otherwise commented on. For example, secondary sources of information on child labour could include a government report presenting and discussing statistics on child labour, or an article outlining children’s views on working in dangerous circumstances.

Evidence about different parts of the policy chain

You could gather evidence about different parts of the policy implementation process:



Evidence about different units of analysis

Will you gather evidence about:

- individuals
- households
- specific age cohorts or social groups
- organisations
- communities
- entire villages or towns?

These are called different units of analysis. You will design your monitoring process differently depending on the unit of analysis you decide to investigate and compare.

Evidence that can be trusted

The success of your advocacy strategy will depend to a large extent on gathering reliable, credible evidence. There is little use in gathering evidence and presenting findings that can be dismissed as fabricated or biased. No-one can be entirely objective when gathering evidence but you should be as transparent as possible about your perspective. Then back it up with sound, reputable methods to produce evidence that will stand up to scrutiny. When is evidence seen as reliable and credible? Here are two considerations:

- **Representivity:** It is important to be alert to the conventions and practices that govern how representative your evidence is regarded. For example, you cannot gather evidence from one or two people and then say it applies on a wider scale. There are accepted ways of deciding on aspects such as sample size, which you will learn more about in unit 6.2.
- **Legitimacy:** When information is obtained legitimately from people, there is openness, free agreement and respect for security on all sides. For example, evidence gained in exchange for payment or other rewards is unlikely to be taken seriously. You cannot promise privacy and then make information public. Evidence on sensitive subjects should always be gathered in a manner that does not place people at risk.

dig deeper

Find out more about selecting a unit of analysis at
www.chronicpoverty.org/CPToolbox/Unitofanalysis.htm


TOOL 11: MATCHING OBJECTIVES TO EVIDENCE

Aim: To specify what kind of evidence you will gather to achieve your monitoring objectives.

Context: This tool can be used individually or with a group. It can be used as an essential 'reality check': it will reveal whether your monitoring objectives may be too broad and ambitious. If so, this is a good time to review what skills, competencies and other resources you have at your disposal and fine-tune your monitoring objectives accordingly.

How to use this tool

Step 1: Draw up a table like those in the examples below. In the left hand column, list all your monitoring objectives one by one.

Step 2: If working with a group, facilitate a brief discussion about different kinds of evidence. Make sure participants are familiar with the terms introduced in this unit.

Step 3: Working individually, in a team or a larger group, the next step is to describe what kind of evidence you will gather in relation to each monitoring objective. Record your decisions in the right-hand column.

Step 4: Look at all the evidence you have listed in the table. Does this seem like a daunting amount or variety of evidence to gather? Do you have access to the kinds of skills and capacity needed to gather evidence of this kind and quantity? Or have you bitten off more than you can chew?

Step 5: If necessary, revise your monitoring objectives until you feel comfortable with the scope and nature of the evidence listed in the right-hand column.

Example 1: Monitoring the Targeted Agricultural Support Programme

Monitoring objectives

Types of evidence needed

The objectives of this monitoring project are to track:

i	whether funds allocated to the programme are reaching the district level	Quantitative budget data on policy inputs to the district level, and qualitative information from officials on flow of funds
ii	whether this policy is reaching those who are most in need of its benefits	Qualitative information from sample of farmers and quantitative data from Department of Agriculture on targeting policy beneficiaries
iii	how many subsistence farmers benefited from the programme between January and December 2008	Quantitative primary data on policy outputs
iv	what obstacles constrain their ability to access the benefits of the programme	Qualitative secondary information on obstacles to programme benefits
Etc		Etc

Example 2: Monitoring the privatisation of municipal water services

Monitoring objectives

Types of evidence needed

The objectives of this monitoring project are to track:

i	to what extent this policy is contributing to job losses and job insecurity at the municipal level	Quantitative secondary data on employment numbers relating to water services at municipal level Quantitative and qualitative information about the casualisation of relevant municipal jobs
ii	to what extent this policy results in increases in the price of water services for consumers during 2007 and 2008	Quantitative data on the price of water services and the percentage of household income spent on water
iii	the implication of increased water tariffs on vulnerable households in x rural and y urban communities	Qualitative primary data on the trade-offs made by vulnerable households to cope with increased water costs
Etc		Etc

Unit 4.4 Choosing indicators

This unit aims to explore what indicators are and how they are used when monitoring a policy.

What are indicators?

Indicators are a way of measuring or pointing to something. They help you to look at a complex situation or process and extract some well-defined, understandable, and clear information. Indicators can be more or less qualitative or quantitative. Some indicators, such as the unemployment rate, have been around for a long time and are very familiar. This indicator does not portray the complex reality of work, where many people may find themselves shifting from employed to unemployed, or work in the informal economy. However, the indicator does provide a 'snapshot' of formal unemployment in terms of numbers at a certain point in time.

Here are two themes you could explore further to help you think about indicators for your own monitoring work:

Established and customised indicators

Some indicators have been 'inherited' from the scientific community, for example those measuring rates of stunting, wasting and weight in children. But you can identify indicators of your own. For example, you could develop indicators that reflect a community's experiences of living in chronic hunger. This allows you to combine or compare evidence from established or official indicators with evidence from your own indicators.

Stronger and weaker indicators

Not all traditional or established indicators are good ones. For example, the quality of schooling is often measured by using exam pass rates. Yet this indicator tells us very little about the quality of education. It looks at the end of the process, and not at what happened along the way. But, you would build a much more accurate picture by tracking indicators of teachers' knowledge and skills, the availability of learning materials, the state of school facilities, opportunities to participate in the classroom, individual attention received per child, and so on. Good indicators usually measure contributing factors and not just end results.



dig deeper

Some very interesting work is being done on indicators in various parts of the world. These resources give valuable ideas and guidance:

- www.enterprise-impact.org.uk/word-files/SelectingIndicators.doc
 - www.sustainablemeasures.com
 - <http://hdr.undp.org/statistics/data/>
 - www.rprogress.org/cihb/index.shtml
- And these warn about over-reliance on indicators:
- www.mande.co.uk/docs/Indicators%20-%20The%20Ants%20and%20the%20Cockroach.pdf
 - www.swaraj.org/shikshantar/ls3_shilpa.htm

Examples of indicators used in policy monitoring

There is no prescribed set of indicators that can be applied to all policy monitoring projects. It is up to you to develop and combine indicators to suit your monitoring objectives and your context. To give you some ideas, the table below presents some typical indicators that could be used to monitor the inputs, outputs, outcomes and impact of a hypothetical HIV and AIDS policy.

HIV and AIDS policy on voluntary counselling and testing (VCT)

Questions you may want to find evidence about:

Possible indicators could include:

On policy inputs: How committed is the government to rolling out this policy in region X?

- budgeted amount for the provision of VCT in region X
- number of staff assigned or employed to provide VCT in region X
- number of VCT facilities set in place/staffed in region X
- how well/efficiently the inputs are disbursed
- the attitudes of government officials to the policy and its roll out

On policy outputs: How much progress has been made in delivering VCT services in region X?

- amount spent on VCT service delivery in region X
- number of people who have made use of VCT services
- percentage of total number of target service users in region X who have made use of VCT services
- peoples' satisfaction with services received at VCT centres
- age, gender or other characteristics of people using/not using VCT services
- reasons people give for not making use of services average distance people have to travel to make use of VCT services
- average time people have to wait at service points before receiving VCT
- level of satisfaction with services received at VCT centres

On policy outcomes and impact: What difference has the delivery of VCT services made to peoples' wellbeing?

- number of people aware of their HIV status in region X
- peoples' perception of how stigma of being HIV+ has changed over time
- percentage of targeted beneficiaries aware of their HIV status
- medium-term changes in sexual attitudes and reported sexual behaviour
- long-term reduction in HIV prevalence rate



case study

Indicators for community-based monitoring in Uganda

In 2002, the Uganda Debt Network (UDN) initiated a community-based monitoring and evaluation process in the Kamuli district. The aim was to establish a network of monitors at grassroots level across six sub-counties in the district to monitor the implementation of poverty-related policies. Ninety representatives from the six sub-counties were identified and invited to participate in an intensive training programme. These community-based monitors helped to select the indicators that they would all use to track certain policies and programmes in their sub-counties. For example, in relation to water and sanitation, they chose the following indicators:

- incidence of diarrhoea
- availability of clean water
- distance from nearest water source
- time spent at borehole or in queue at water source
- number of boreholes in a zone.

The monitors then collected evidence in relation to the agreed indicators in identified zones within their sub-counties. The evidence was captured in a 'report card' format written in the local language. A customised information system was set in place to pass information from zone to sub-county, district and national level. Once analysed, the evidence was used to engage with local councillors and other authorities on important challenges undermining the fight against poverty in Kamuli district.

Source: UDN Policy Department (2002), *The Community Based Monitoring and Evaluation System (CBMES) Pilot test in Kamuli District*. Unpublished report.



case study

Children’s drawings shed light on child hunger in South Africa

Indicators do not have to capture evidence in the form of rates, ratios or percentages. In 2004, a participation study was undertaken with children living in poverty and/or difficult circumstances in four different parts of South Africa. The aim was to uncover how they themselves experienced and assessed their socio-economic conditions. The children were asked, among other things, to draw pictures on paper plates showing their favourite foods and then the foods they usually eat. The food items drawn by the children thus served as indicators: they gave the researchers an indication of the way the children experienced food deprivation.

Source: Deborah Ewing (2004) *Report on the Children’s Participation Component of Monitoring Child Socio-Economic Rights in South Africa: Achievements and Challenges*. Cape Town: Idasa.



to cut a long story short

Tips for choosing indicators

- Develop your own unique combination of indicators. Remember that indicators can be used to record quantitative and qualitative information – and to provide evidence on policy inputs, outputs, outcomes and impact.
- Some things are more difficult to measure via indicators than others. It can be a challenge to find indicators to reflect, for example, girls’ vulnerability in gangs or peoples’ experiences of social exclusion. In this instance, it is often useful to consider what behaviour most closely manifests the trend you are trying to measure – and try to find an indicator linked to that behaviour.
- The indicators you choose – just like your monitoring objectives – should be SMART (see unit 4.2). So don’t forget to check that your indicators are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound.
- Indicators should produce evidence that is accurate and verifiable. This means that when different people use the same indicator to measure the same thing, they should end up with the same evidence.
- Be selective. Choose a few precise and clear indicators that you can track well rather than a host of measures that may dilute your efforts.
- You need to be able to see how measurements of a single indicator change over time. In order to do so, it is important to establish a baseline for tracking your indicators over time (see unit 4.5).

Using existing data to establish a baseline

Many countries have a national statistics office or agency that gathers and publishes data about the country's population, including:

- **census data** – basic information about population size and distribution, gender, age, language, educational status and other characteristics
- **household surveys** – information on income, consumption, household activities and assets
- **labour/employment surveys** – levels of unemployment, numbers of people working in different economic sectors and so forth.

Local or international research institutes or organisations may already have gathered data on the indicators you have selected. For example:

- The United Nations Development Programme's annual **Human Development Report** provides information on a range of developmental indicators for each country, including progress in reaching the millennium development goals.
- The World Bank's **World Development Reports** focus on different themes every year. They present country information on economic, social and environmental trends.

Unit 4.5 Establishing a baseline

This unit aims to explain what a baseline is, why it is useful and how you can set one. Indicators are used to measure progress (or the lack of it) in the implementation of a policy. But to be able to measure progress you need to know what the situation was at the start. You need a point of reference – a baseline – that allows you to compare evidence over time. Baseline information needs to be collected for each of your chosen indicators. You can establish a baseline by using existing information or by conducting your own research.

Using existing data to establish a baseline

Imagine you are monitoring a policy that aims to decrease unemployment in a particular region. As an indicator, you have chosen the region's unemployment rate. You want to track whether the unemployment rate decreases between a given point, say 2005, and a point in the future when the policy is expected to have had an impact, say 2008. In this case, the unemployment rate in this region in 2005 would be your baseline. Using existing data on unemployment in the region was therefore the easiest and quickest way to establish a baseline. For example, such data could have been recorded as part of government's labour research.

Any information you find about an indicator can be more or less authentic, credible, representative and legitimate. It can also be more or less easy to interpret and analyse. Before using such information, consider whether it can be trusted and how well it matches your own monitoring objectives. Here are some factors to take into account:

Advantages of using existing data

- The cost and time demands of gathering existing information are generally low.
- You may find high-quality data, gathered in a sound way by experts, covering a much larger geographical area or sample size than you could have tackled yourself.
- The data may have been collected at different points in time, so you can use it to establish a baseline and discern a trend.
- The data could be broken down in such a way that you can easily supplement it with additional evidence of your own.

Challenges to take up before you use it

- The definitions or assumptions used when gathering the information may be different from your own, and may not be explicitly stated.
- You need to know how the data was gathered in order to assess how reliable it is. This information may not always be available.
- Existing information could be out of date, or the time frames used to compile the data may not match your needs.
- The information may not be broken down (disaggregated) in the way you need.
- The information could be biased. Those who gathered the evidence might have had reasons to present more optimistic or pessimistic results.



TOOL 12: HOW RELIABLE IS YOUR DATA?

Aim: To assess available data to decide how reliable and useful it is.

Context: This tool can be used individually or with a group, although it is probably best suited for individual research. If you have many sources of data to assess, members of a network or team could use the steps below and apply them to different data sets.

How to use this tool

Step 1: Establish the source of the information. For example, was it gathered by a government department, by independent researchers, consultants or a CSO? What do you know about their respective reputations?

Step 2: Pinpoint the timeframe for the data. How long ago was it gathered? What time period does the information apply to? How does this relate to the time period you have chosen for your monitoring?

Step 3: Find out how the information in the document was gathered. What methods were used? How reliable were these methods?

Step 4: Assess whether the data is representative. What or who does it represent?

Step 5: If the source includes a discussion or analysis of the data, consider from what perspective this has been done. Can the data be interpreted in other ways?

Step 6: Decide whether the data reflect any clear contradictions or discrepancies. Can these be explained to your satisfaction?

Step 7: Draw a conclusion. Based on your answers to the questions above, what can you say about the reliability, credibility and legitimacy of this data?

Doing research to establish a baseline

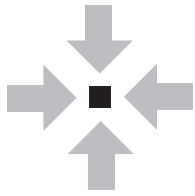
It is also possible that no data exists that matches your chosen indicator. In this instance, you could:

- Conduct your own research to record **baseline data** on the unemployment rate in the region. Then as you proceed with your monitoring, measure the same indicator again in six months' time to see what has changed. Any of the methods for gathering evidence (see chapter 6) can be used, although some may be more suitable than others.
- You could also gather data relating to a group of people at a certain point in time who have not been beneficiaries of the given policy. This is called a **control group** and the data about this group serves as your baseline.



dig deeper

Find Human Development Reports at <http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2005>
Find World Development Reports at <http://econ.worldbank.org/wdr>



interaction

These pages offer some suggestions for facilitating a group discussion on the main themes raised in this chapter.

A FOUNDATION FOR MONITORING

1. Perturbing questions
2. Defining our monitoring objectives
3. Thinking about evidence
4. Selecting indicators

Our objectives

The objectives of this project are:

- a to monitor the Free Healthcare for the Elderly programme, run by the Department of Health, in order to assess:
 - i whether funds allocated to the programme reach the district clinic level within two weeks of disbursement
 - ii whether this policy is reaching those most in need of its benefits
 - iii how many elderly people make use of the services between January and December 2008
 - iv what obstacles constrain their use of the services
 - v how the policy impacts on indirect beneficiaries, such as children in the care of elderly people.
- b to monitor the... etc

ACTIVITY 1: ASKING THE DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

Outcome: Participants have identified the key questions they feel are most crucial or most urgent to monitor in relation to a policy.

Step 1: Introduce this activity by discussing why it is important to pinpoint clear questions about a policy to investigate through your monitoring work.

Step 2: Ensure that participants have spent some time reading available documents about the policy you have chosen to monitor or have these documents at hand and allow time for individual reading during the session.

Step 3: Use TOOLS 8, 9 and/or 10 – or other methods of your choice – to look into the content of the policy from different angles.

Step 4: Allow time for personal reflection. Invite each of the participants to think about what government is trying to achieve with the policy and what confuses or concerns them about the policy's design, prospects for success, implementation plans, etc. Ask the participants to pinpoint their three *most* difficult questions about the policy.

Step 5: Facilitate a group discussion based on participants' perturbing questions. Note overlaps between questions and help the group to cluster their thoughts into a few main or over-riding questions.

ACTIVITY 2: DEFINING OUR MONITORING OBJECTIVES

Outcome: Participants have formulated a joint set of clear objectives to guide their policy monitoring work.

Step 1: Look at the list of questions you have identified in relation to a policy. Use the information in unit 4.2 to explain to participants how questions can be reformulated as objectives. If necessary, review the SMART objectives and examples given on page 43.

Step 2: Use the questions you have chosen as a basis for drawing up clear and SMART objectives for your monitoring work. The following example shows how you could set out your monitoring objectives:

ACTIVITY 3: THINKING ABOUT EVIDENCE

Outcome : Participants have considered different kinds of evidence and begun to define what kinds they will gather in relation to a specific policy.

Step 1: Lead a discussion about different kinds of evidence. Use the information in unit 4.3 to explain that in any monitoring project, you might set out to gather:

- quantitative and/or qualitative evidence
- evidence from primary and/or secondary sources
- evidence about any or all parts of the policy chain
- evidence about individuals, households and/or any other units of analysis.

What is more, how you gather your evidence will determine whether it is seen as credible information or whether it can easily be dismissed as unreliable.

Step 2: Distribute copies of the questions below or write them up on flipchart paper. Discuss the questions together or in smaller groups.

Step 3: Record the decisions you have made regarding the evidence you will gather.

interaction

Thirteen questions about evidence

1. Do you plan to gather statistics and figures?
2. Will you collect ideas, perspectives and opinions?
3. What combination of quantitative and qualitative evidence will give you the best fuel for advocacy?
4. Will you gather primary evidence of your own?
5. Can you use existing evidence that has already been recorded by others?
6. What secondary sources of evidence can you use?
7. How will you guard against possible bias in existing sources?
8. What combination of primary and secondary evidence best suits your needs and capacity?
9. Will you need evidence about policy inputs, outputs, outcomes and/or impact?
10. What 'units' of people will you gather evidence about?
11. Will you compare evidence from two, three or a hundred sites?
12. How will you make sure that your evidence is reliable, representative and legitimate?
13. What skills and competencies do you need to gather evidence that can be trusted?

ACTIVITY 4: SELECTING INDICATORS

Outcome: Participants have identified and agreed on a list of indicators to track in relation to a policy.

Step 1: Invite a variety of stakeholders with an interest in the policy to help you identify indicators. Consider inviting people who:

- have practical experience of the policy in the context where it is implemented
- will play a role in gathering the evidence
- will analyse, report on or advocate using the evidence
- have specific expertise in developing and using indicators (such as a person with statistical knowledge).

Step 2: Explain what indicators are and how they are used in monitoring work. Invite those with experience or expertise to describe other projects where indicators have been used.

Step 3: Clarify and re-state your monitoring objectives (see unit 4.2). For each specific objective, brainstorm a list of possible indicators that could tell you whether the situation has improved or deteriorated.

Step 4: Discuss any indicators already being used by government or others to track or report on the policy or programme you have chosen to monitor. Work together to review and assess this information.

Step 5: Consider whether data may already be available in the public domain relating to any of the indicators you have listed. How useful would such data be to you? If appropriate, use TOOL 12 to assess available information.

Step 6: Invite participants to identify the indicators that they feel would provide the most compelling and accurate evidence on policy implementation. You could simply talk until you reach consensus, or use ranking or scoring to select indicators.

Step 7: Out of the indicators identified in step 6, choose those that you know you could track in practical terms. Pick those on which you can gather information within the timeframe and with the resources and skills you have at your disposal.

NEEDED: A baseline for each indicator

Use the information in unit 4.5 to discuss the importance of having a baseline for every indicator in your monitoring plan. Depending on the indicators you have chosen, you may have to do some research to find out if reliable data already exists in relation to these indicators. If not, decide when and how you will establish a baseline in relation to your indicators.

RECAP



Chapter 4: Laying a foundation for policy monitoring

By now you should have:

- decided which questions about a policy it would be most crucial to monitor
- defined your monitoring objectives
- identified what kinds of evidence you plan to gather
- chosen indicators to monitor in relation to a policy
- decided how you will establish a baseline for your monitoring process.

The next steps are to:

- ➔ look into the budgets of the policy you are monitoring
- ➔ draw conclusions about the way public resources are being used to roll out the policy.

Chapter 5 can assist you with these steps.

ANALYSING POLICY BUDGETS

5

This chapter aims to introduce some core concepts relating to government budgets and to discuss ways of analysing them. It highlights how important it is to look into the budget dimension of the policies you have chosen to monitor. It explores the following questions:

- What is a budget and what does it consist of?
- Where do resources come from for policy implementation?
- How are resources directed to policies and what factors shape this process?
- What is budget analysis and how can you do it?

The chapter includes the following tools:

TOOL 13: IDENTIFYING SOURCES OF REVENUE

TOOL 14: ASSESSING BUDGET PRIORITY

TOOL 15: TRACKING SHIFTS IN PRIORITY

TOOL 16: ADJUSTING BUDGET FIGURES FOR INFLATION

TOOL 17: CALCULATING A DEFLATOR

TOOL 18: GROWTH IN SPENDING OVER TIME

TOOL 19: PER CAPITA EXPENDITURE

The interaction pages at the end of the chapter present group activities for investigating the budget dimension of policies further in your organisation or network. They will help you to:

- understand the challenges of allocating budget resources, and
- identify budget programmes to analyse as part of your policy monitoring work.

Unit 5.1 Budget basics

The aim of this unit is to give an overview of what a budget is. It presents some key terms that will be useful to you in your work – such as budget, expenditure figures, budget classification, revenue, debt and grants.

What is a budget?

A budget is a plan outlining what to spend money on, and where to get that money from. It could be made by a family, a company, a government or any other entity. When the members of a family draw up a budget, they have to prioritise what they will spend their money on. They also need to know how much they have available to spend. If this amount is not enough, there are a few options to consider: they could try to raise more income, decide how to cut their expenses, take out a loan or apply for a grant. The budget of a government is not that different from the budget of a family or a company. It just involves many more categories of expenditure and sources of income.

What are expenditure figures?

The words *expenditure* and *spending* mean the same thing. Both terms are used in this toolkit to talk about money paid out by government to fulfil various functions. There is a difference between **planned**, **approved** and **actual spending** figures:

- A government's **planned** spending on a policy or programme is sometimes called **expenditure estimates** or **allocations**. You should be able to find these figures in a government's annual budget, which is usually available at the beginning of a financial year. They reflect a government's intentions, but not what actually happened.



- A government's planned and **approved spending** may not always be the same. In most countries, it is parliament that approves the government's budget. What the government presents in the form of planned expenditures, may therefore change in the process of being approved by parliament.



- The amount a government actually spends on a policy or programme is usually referred to as **actual expenditure**. These figures are generally only available after the end of a financial year, in the form of expenditure reports (although some countries release actual spending data during the course of a budget year). They should reflect how a government *actually* used public resources to put a policy into practice.

Why monitor government budgets?

The majority of policies need resources to be implemented. With a few exceptions, policies only have an impact when they are translated into the delivery of goods and services which, of course, costs money. For example, to deliver health services, money is needed to pay nurses and doctors, build and maintain clinics, provide medicines, beds, equipment and so forth. Many policies that have the potential to make a difference to people's lives cannot do so without a budget.

How is government spending classified?

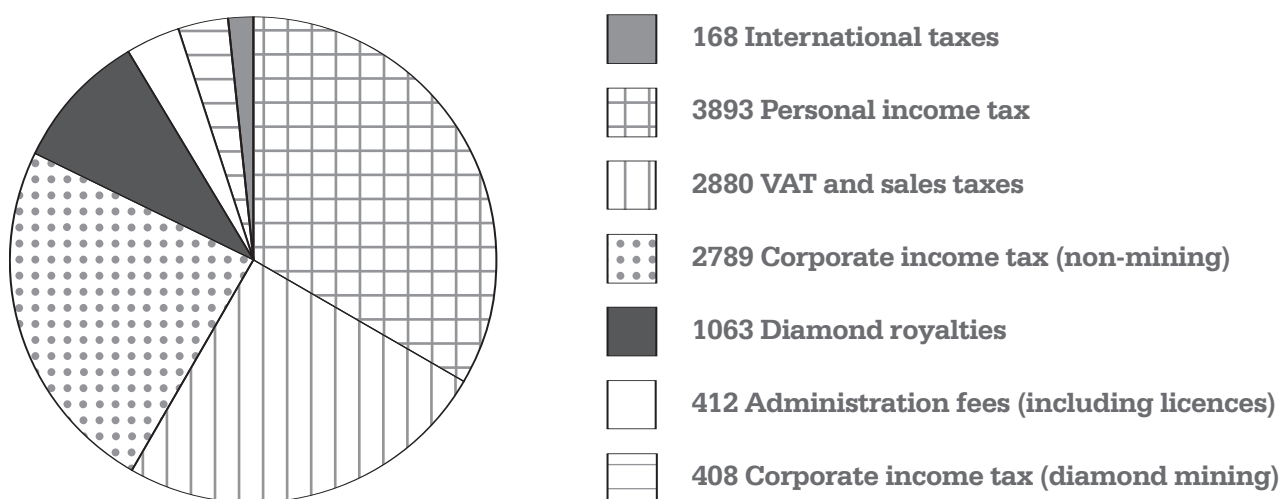
Budget documents use different accounting systems to classify and organise their figures. You will probably need to spend some time sifting through relevant budgets to see if you can identify spending categories that relate to the policy you are monitoring. For example, the information in a budget may be divided up into:

- programmes, sub-programmes, and sub-sub programmes
- line items, such as rent, salaries, travel, equipment and so forth
- functions, such as education, transport, agriculture, defence and so forth
- current and capital expenditure:
 - **current expenditure** is spending on items that are consumed and only last a limited period of time, including salaries, electricity, stationary, medicines and so forth.
 - **capital expenditure** is spending on items that will last and be used over and over again, like buildings, infra-structure, roads and vehicles.

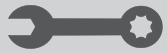
What is government revenue?

A government's income – or revenue – determines how much it has available to spend on the implementation of policies. Governments usually gather revenue from various sources to finance the functions they are expected to perform. Inside the country, money is collected in the form of taxes and levies. These could include for example, income tax, company tax, sales tax (VAT), import and export duties, levies charged for services, and so forth. All these sources together form a country's revenue base. Below is an example of the **revenue base** of Namibia.

Government revenue sources in Namibia, 2005/06 (in million Namibian dollars)



Source: International Monetary Fund (IMF)



TOOL 13: IDENTIFYING SOURCES OF REVENUE

Aim: To gain an overview of the government's sources of revenue in your own country.

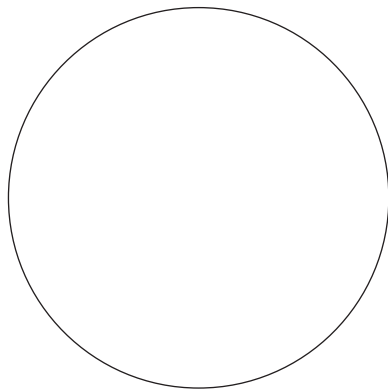
Context: This tool can be used to assess the revenue of a national, regional or local government. The level or levels you choose will depend on the degree of local government control over decisions and resources in your country. You could decide on the most appropriate level(s) together as a policy monitoring team and/or consult with someone from the Ministry of Finance or Revenue in your country.

How to use this tool

Step 1: Find out what information is available from your government on its revenue sources.

Step 2: Make a list of your government's different sources of revenue.

Step 3: Draw an empty circle/pie chart like the one below, either by hand or with the help of a computer (or draw a table if you want to compare revenue over several years). See TOOL 22 (on page 79) for more guidance on creating charts.



Step 4: Now divide the pie chart into the various sources of revenue you identified. Make sure the size of each slice shows the relative contribution it makes to total revenue.

Step 5: Find out and discuss how the government itself views its revenue base and what plans or strategies it has in place regarding taxes, duties, levies, loans, and so forth.

Step 6: If possible, take a deeper look at each slice of the revenue pie:

- Consider how important, effective and reliable each one is as a revenue source.
- Debate the distribution of revenue sources. Are they sustainable? For example, if the government gets a sizeable income from export taxes on coffee, what will happen if international prices drop? Are they equitable? For example, do small businesses pay the same taxes as large multinational companies? Do people on lower incomes pay less for local services provided by the government than people on higher incomes?

What is public debt?

When a government's own revenue base does not provide enough income, it may borrow money from other governments, the private sector or from the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank or the African Development Bank. In so doing, governments build up debts, which then need to be repaid, often with interest.

How much debt is too much?

Government loans are not necessarily problematic: borrowing money can assist development as long as the debt incurred is not too large and the conditions attached to the loan do not force the government to implement politically, socially and economically harmful policy reforms. The revenue gained through loan agreements should be used to ensure that a country becomes less dependent on aid in the future. The following questions may help you to find out more about the debt situation of your country:

- How big is your country's public debt? Has it increased or decreased over recent years?
- How, when and by whom are decisions made about loans? What role do citizens play in these decisions?
- Who is lending money to your country?
- How much is paid each year in interest and debt repayments?
- How much will the government be paying in interest and debt repayments in five, ten, fifteen and twenty years' time?
- If you look at total government revenue, what share comes from loans?
- When you look at total government spending over a year, what share is taken up by debt repayments?
- How has the money derived from loans been used?
- Which experts or organisations can help you to investigate these questions further?



dig deeper

Find out more about public debt from

- www.afrodad.org
- www.jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk
- www.unitar.org/dfm/Resource_Center/Links/NGOs.htm
- [www.imf.org/external/np/mae/pdebt/2000/eng – Guidelines for Public Debt Management](http://www.imf.org/external/np/mae/pdebt/2000/eng-Guidelines%20for%20Public%20Debt%20Management)

Many loans come with conditions attached. For example, a government may be given a loan on condition that it reduces the size of its civil service. In some countries, shrinking an over-sized civil service may be useful. It could free up more resources to spend on pro-poor policies. On the other hand, it could also contribute to unemployment (as civil servants are retrenched), poverty (as households lose a steady income) and a gradual erosion of the government's ability to carry out its functions (as governments cannot deploy the resources nor employ the staff required to challenge poverty). It is useful to be aware of public debt levels and the conditions attached to loan agreements in your own country. Some CSOs actively monitor the effects of both high public debt and loan conditions.

What is a grant?

Governments may also apply for grants to increase their revenue and finance their spending. Such grants could derive from private sources, but this is not very common. Most often, governments enter into development cooperation or aid agreements with other governments, the United Nations, or the World Bank.

- Bilateral cooperation is when a donor government gives grants to a recipient government.
- Multilateral cooperation is when donor governments pool their grants through institutions such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the European Union and the World Bank.

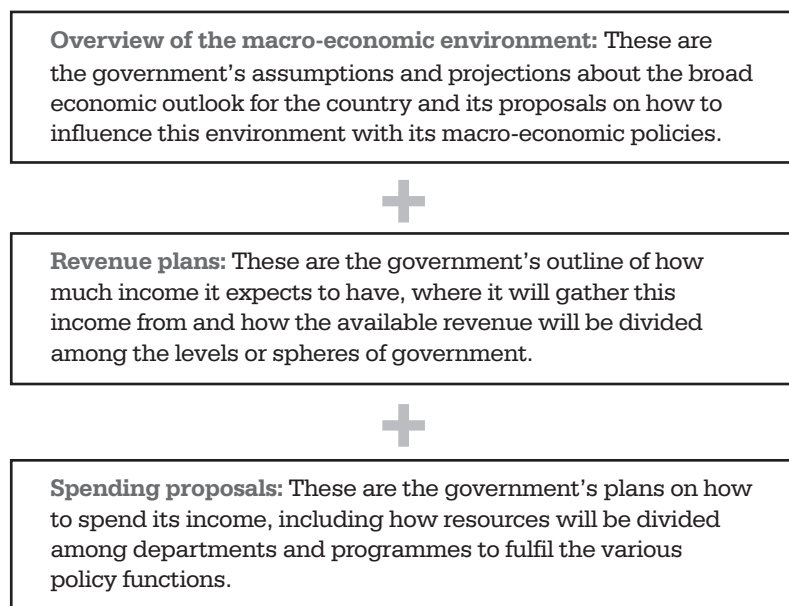
Many African countries have become heavily dependent on grants as a source of revenue. When monitoring policies, it may therefore be important to track the influence and impact of development aid agreements on the content of policies the government is implementing and on its accountability to citizens. Such aid can play a positive role in supporting a country's prospects. To enhance this, you may want to share evidence about how policies are affecting the people living in poverty with the donors who are giving the aid. You could even consider including a donor representative in your monitoring team or network. However, aid can also have negative effects, especially if it is not monitored properly or it is being used to promote policies that are harmful to people living in poverty. Finally, over-dependence on grants as a source of income is not sustainable over the long term.

Unit 5.2 Resources for policy implementation

This unit aims to consider how resources are channelled to policies and what factors affect the allocation process.

How are resources allocated to policies?

Governments are responsible for allocating resources to the various policies under their domain. In most countries, an overall budget is drawn up every year (typically by the Ministry or Department of Finance) and presented to parliament for approval. Ideally, a national government budget should cover the following three elements (although they may not always be packaged in this way or be released all in one go):



It is through this budget process that resources are allocated to various ministries and departments for the implementation of policies that may impact on poverty. How a policy is treated in the budget gives a good indication of a government's real commitment to implementation.

How do governments prepare their budgets?

Traditionally, governments used to prepare budgets based on their past spending patterns, looking only at the year immediately ahead. This way of budgeting makes it very difficult to implement changes or to plan ahead. Many governments have recently adopted a more dynamic way of budgeting, known as a medium-term expenditure framework (MTEF). With this approach, government budgets are drawn up based on policy decisions and with a longer view to the future. In countries using an MTEF, you will usually find that government budgets are prepared not only for the forthcoming year, but for the subsequent two years as well.

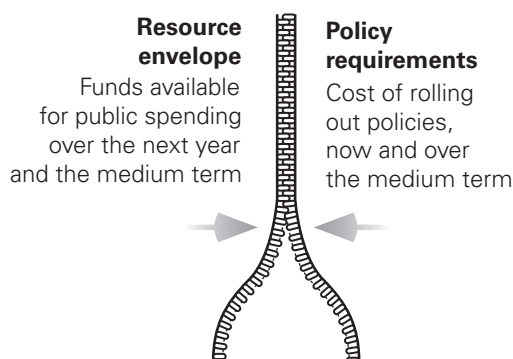
Why is the MTEF important?

Policies are often drawn up without much thought about the costs of implementation. Many policies are even adopted and put into action without knowing exactly how much they need or actually use up. The MTEF is a very useful tool for governments to link up their budgets and their policies. It calls on them to create a match or balance between the policies they want to roll out and the resources they have available for this purpose.

Do all policies need financial resources?

There may be some policies that do not require financial input. For example, a government could have a policy on freedom of religion. As long as the policy remains a mere statement of principle, it is unlikely to cost any money. Yet as soon as a government decides, for example, to raise awareness about this policy or take action against religious intolerance, it will need resources to do so. This is not to suggest that the budget is the most or only important aspect of a policy. It may, for example, be useful to consider other indicators of policy progress (see unit 4.4).

MATCH



For CSOs involved in policy monitoring, the MTEF is an advantage. It usually improves the amount and quality of information available on government budgets and policies. It makes it easier to trace the relationships between policies and resources. It often means that parliament, civil society and the public have a better view on how their government is using public funds to meet specific policy goals. This creates a basis to hold governments to account for their actions.

What if there aren't enough resources for all the policies?

In developing countries, income from taxes, loans and grants are generally not enough to allow the government to meet everyone's needs. Governments face the challenge of weighing up the various needs and deciding how to allocate the available resources. The policies that are given the largest slices are often called **policy priorities**. In choosing these priorities, a government reflects – in its budget – what goals it is most committed to. So you can see that a government's budget is not just a financial document: it is a powerful political tool.

When a policy is not given enough resources, it is unlikely to have the desired impact.

How should governments use resources to meet the needs of their citizens?

Of course, policies do not only need financial resources. In most cases, they also need human resources (like staff with the right kinds of skills) and physical resources (like equipment and infrastructure). These physical and human resources usually cost money. In addition, all the resources dedicated to a policy should be put to good use. They need to be well-managed and coordinated to ensure that the goods (for example medicines) and services (for example nurses) needed to implement a policy (for example, free healthcare for pregnant women) are accessible to and used by the people they were intended for. Even then, a policy has no guarantee of making a difference. Before we can say it has, the goods and services have to bring about beneficial changes that allow people to improve their lives and livelihoods.

Unit 5.3 Budget analysis

This unit aims to introduce you to some basic tools for analysing government spending. These tools provide the foundation from which you can explore budget analysis further. There are many good resources available that can help you to learn more (see the dig deeper box).

Questions about government spending on a policy or programme

What can you find out about a policy or programme by analysing government budget data? The table below gives a quick overview of some of the kinds of questions often addressed in civil society monitoring of public spending:

Budget focus	Questions to ask
You can ask questions about the priority given to a policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What share of available funds is allocated to this policy compared to other functions? • Is this in line with the government's policy promises?
You can ask questions about the adequacy of spending on a policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much has the government allocated to this policy? • Is it enough? • Are the government's allocations keeping up with inflation?
You can ask questions about the equity of spending on a policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is per capita spending on this policy distributed fairly among different provinces? • Is spending targeted to those most in need?
You can ask questions about the efficiency of spending on a policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are allocated resources actually being spent? • Is the right mix of inputs (school books, better qualified teachers, new classrooms), being used to deliver outputs (good quality primary education for every primary school-age child) in the most efficient way?

Source: This table has been adapted from a presentation by Alex Vennekens-Poane, *Budget Analysis Tools* (2003) and from Marritt Claassens and Len Verwey, *Introduction to Applied Budget Analysis*, Budget Information Service, Idasa (Cape Town, 2005).

This unit helps you to ask questions about the priority, adequacy and fairness of government spending on a policy or programme. All the tools can be applied to planned and actual government spending. It is important to compare what a government plans to spend (as set out in its budget) to what it has actually spent (as indicated in expenditure reports). This, in turn, will shed some light on the questions of efficiency.

What budget information do you need?

The questions you are able to investigate will depend largely on the type and quality of budget data you have at your disposal, and the time period covered by the data. For the purposes of the tools in this unit, it is assumed that:

- you can identify one or more specific budget programmes that relate to the policy you are monitoring
- within the relevant budget programme(s), you can identify or calculate the amounts the government has allocated to and/or spent on the policy you are interested in
- you have budget data relating to this policy for more than one year
- you have some data available on the rest of government's budget (although it need not be very detailed).

Source: Much of the information in this unit has been adapted from *Budget Monitoring and Expenditure Tracking Training Manual*, a resource developed by the Civil Society for Poverty Reduction in Zambia (May 2004). It is available online at: www.cspr.org.zm/Reports&Updates/BudgetTrackingManual_Final.pdf



dig deeper

Learn more about budget analysis from

- www.internationalbudget.org – see especially *A Guide to Budget Work for NGOs*
- www.idasa.org.za – see especially *Introduction to Applied Budget Analysis*
- www.odi.org.uk/pppg/cape
- www.iie.org/Website/WPreview.cfm?CWID=336&WID=171
- www.iie.org/Website/CustomPages/ACFE8.pdf
- www.unpac.ca/gender/learnmore.html – to find *Engendering Budgets: A Practitioner's Guide to Understanding and Implementing Gender-Responsive Budgets*, by Debbie Budlender and Guy Hewitt (2003).

Poverty reduction strategies and the budget

The different budget tools presented in this unit can be applied to a variety of policies. You may have chosen to monitor one or more policies or programmes associated with a Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) in your country. If so, the tools can be used to investigate the following questions in relation to government budgeting for poverty reduction:

About the priority being attached to PRS-related programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the government's commitment to the PRS reflected in the budget? • What share of the budget is allocated to, and spent on, areas related to the PRS in real terms (see TOOL 16)? • What share of sectoral and departmental budgets are being dedicated to PRS-related policies or programmes at national, sub-national and local levels?
About the adequacy of spending on PRS-related programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the total amount budgeted for the PRS? • How has the amount budgeted for the PRS changed in real terms (see TOOL 16), compared to previous years? • Is enough being allocated to, and spent on, the PRS? • Should there be less, more or better spending?
About equity in spending on PRS-related programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much is budgeted per capita for the PRS? • How much is actually spent per capita on policies and programmes related to the PRS? • Are PRS resources distributed equitably?
About the efficiency of spending on PRS-related programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are allocated resources to the PRS being spent as planned? • Is growth in allocations to the PRS translating into growth in actual spending?



TOOL 14: ASSESSING BUDGET PRIORITY

Aim: To see how allocations to, or spending on, a particular policy or programme is prioritised against other functions.

Context: This tool can be used individually or with the help of your policy monitoring team.

How to use this tool:

Step 1: Establish the total amount your government had available for public spending in a given year. This amount may be called total allocated expenditure in some budget documents. It is the total revenue minus interest payments and amounts set aside for contingencies.

Step 2: Find out the total amount allocated to the policy or programmes you are monitoring in the same year.

Step 3: Compare the two figures derived from steps 1 and 2. Express the amount allocated to the policy as a percentage of the total: what share of the total available resources in a certain year did the government earmark for spending on the policy you are monitoring?

Step 4: Present your findings in the form of a table or chart.

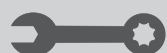
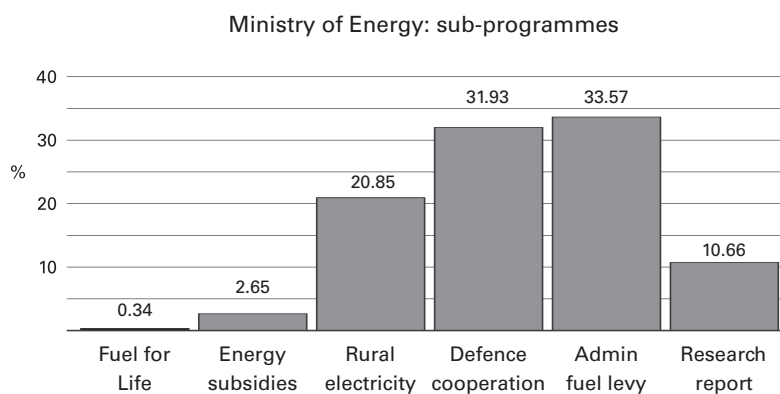
Example

You can use the same method to investigate how much of a priority certain sub-programmes within a single department or ministry are. For instance, imagine you are analysing budgets relating to an energy policy that aims to assist low-income households. You have identified three sub-programmes through which budget resources are channelled to implement this policy. You now want to compare allocations to these pro-poor sub-programmes with allocations to other energy sub-programmes:

Calculating a share of the total budget

Ministry of Energy sub-programmes 2003	Amount	% of total energy budget	% of total national budget
Sub-programmes targeting low-income households			
Fuel for Life programme	7.60	0.34	0.017
Energy subsidies to female-headed households	59.70	2.65	0.130
Rural electricity grid upgrade programme	470.00	20.85	1.026
Other energy sub-programmes			
Nuclear defence cooperation programme	719.80	31.93	1.572
Administration of fuel levy	756.60	33.57	1.652
Research support programme	240.30	10.66	0.525
Total energy budget	2,254.00		
Total national budget	45,800.00		

The shares of the various energy sub-programmes relative to the total energy budget can also be presented in the form of a chart, as shown below. Notice that the percentages in the right-hand column of the table above (reflecting the share of national budget resources being spent on pro-poor energy programmes) are too small to present effectively in a chart.


TOOL 15: TRACKING SHIFTS IN PRIORITY

Aim: To see how the share of funds allocated to a policy or programme has changed over time.

Context: This tool can be used individually or while analysing budgets with a group.

How to use this tool

Step 1: Find out how much of its available resources your government has allocated to a programme or policy over a number of years.

Step 2: For each year, express the share allocated to the programme or policy as a percentage of the total.

Step 3: Present the information in a table or chart, as shown in the example below.

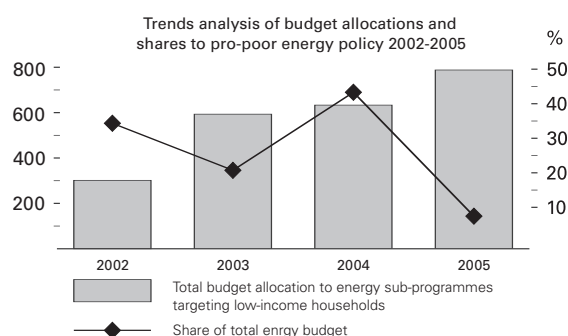
Example:

By comparing shares over a number of years, you can see if a government's prioritisation of a policy or programme has changed. Tracking the same budget item or share over time is called trends analysis. For example, you may want to see whether the energy sub-programmes you are monitoring enjoy more or less priority now than they did in earlier years. The following table compares allocations to the policy as a share of the total energy budget over time. You could apply the same method to actual spending data.

Trends analysis of budget allocations to and shares of pro-poor energy policy, 2002-2005

Year	Total budget allocations to energy sub-programmes targeting low-income households	Share of total energy budget (%)
2002	300.00	33
2003	537.00	24
2004	620.00	40
2005	756.00	10

This information can be presented in the form of a chart. The example below shows that, even though the annual allocations have been increasing steadily, the priority given to the policy within the total energy budget has actually decreased over the years.



key words

What are nominal and real amounts?

- Nominal** figures are the actual amounts that are allocated to, or spent on, a policy or programme. For example, it might be that in 2003, a government spent 100,000 of a given currency on a community gardening programme. In 2005, it spent 120,000 on the same programme. So the government has been increasing its spending on the programme in nominal terms.
- Real** figures are amounts that have been adjusted for inflation. When you compare real budget figures, you are looking at changes in what you can purchase with these amounts over time. So using the same example, it could be that in 2005 you could buy a lot less with a single unit of the currency in question than you could in 2003. The government could actually have spent less on the community gardening programme in 2005 than it did in 2003, if you express the amounts in real terms.


TOOL 16: ADJUSTING BUDGET FIGURES FOR INFLATION

Aim: To assess the difference between nominal and real budget figures.

Context: Governments' budgets are presented in nominal amounts. When analysing budget data, it is essential to take account of the difference between **nominal** and **real** amounts (see the key words box). In countries where inflation is ever-changing, it is critical to calculate the real value of budgeted figures. These real figures reflect how much purchasing power the allocations have at the time of expenditure. This tool is especially useful when you want budget amounts to compare government allocations or spending over time.

How to use this tool:

Step 1: To convert nominal figures to real figures, you need to choose a base year. A base year is the year for which you assume that a nominal amount is equal to the real value of the amount at that time. It does not really matter what year you choose as your base year – as long as it is clearly stated and used consistently in all your calculations. If possible, use the same base year as the government does when doing its calculations. This will make it easier to discuss your findings with them later and get your advocacy message across.

Step 2: For every subsequent year after the base year, you use a deflator to determine the value of an amount once inflation has been taken into account. The deflator is a number value that differs from country to country, and from year to year, depending on the inflation rate. In many countries, you should be able to find out which deflator to use by consulting the Ministry of Finance or national statistics office. It is also possible to calculate a deflator yourself (see TOOL 17).

Step 3: Once you know which deflator to use, you can convert a nominal amount into a real amount using the following formula:

$$\text{real value} = \frac{\text{nominal value}}{\text{deflator}}$$

Example

The table below shows how a deflator is used to convert nominal values into real values, with 2001/02 taken as the base year. It illustrates that a real value can differ markedly from the nominal value:

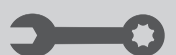
Converting a nominal value to a real value

Year	Nominal Value	Deflator	Real Value
2001/02	300.00	1	300.00
2002/03	540.00	1.173	460.36
2003/04	620.00	1.386	447.33
2004/05	756.00	1.645	459.57

How to work out real value on a calculator

- Punch in the nominal value
- Push this sign: /
- Punch in the deflator figure
- Push this sign: =

The figure you now see is the real value of the amount you started with.



TOOL 17: CALCULATING A DEFLATOR

Aim: To assess the difference between nominal and real budget figures.

Context: This tool would only be used if you cannot obtain a deflator from a reliable source and rather choose to calculate your own. If you find the calculations difficult, draw someone with budget analysis experience into your monitoring team.

How to use this tool

Step 1: Choose a base year (see TOOL 16).

Step 2: Decide whether to use a Consumer Price Index (CPI), Producer Price Index (PPI) or Gross Domestic Product (GDP) measure of inflation. Of the three, the GDP inflation rate uses the broadest definition of inflation – so it may be the best to use (see the key words box on this page).

Step 3: Decide on the period of years for which you want to calculate a deflator.

Step 4: Find out where in your country you can get estimates of the inflation rate for the period in question and obtain these figures. They could be available from the Ministry of Finance, an international agency such as the World Bank or IMF, or a private business.

Step 5: Use the inflation rate data to calculate the price index and price deflators for the period in question, as illustrated in the example below.

Example

Say the inflation rate you have chosen is 11.6 per cent for year 1, 15.4 per cent for year 2 and 14.7 per cent in year 3. Remember year 1 is your base year.

- In year 1, the price index is 100 (the price index is always 100 in the base year)
- In year 2, the price index is $100 + 100 * (15.4/100) = 115.4$
- In year 3, the price index is $115.4 + 115.4 * (14.7/100) = 132.4$

Source: Tools 16 and 17 have been adapted from Judith Streak, *Monitoring Government Budgets to Advance Child Rights: A Guide For NGOs*. Idasa (Cape Town 2003), pages 82–83. Go to www.idasa.org.za click on 'programmes', under the title 'Budget Information Service' click on 'Children's Budget Unit', under 'Resources' click on 'Toolkits'.



key words

What are CPI, PPI and GDP measures of inflation?

- A **Consumer Price Index** is a measure of the average change in prices of a number of goods that consumers typically buy.
- A **Producer Price Index** measures the average change in prices of a range of products that businesses typically buy.
- The **Gross Domestic Product** is the total value of goods and services produced by a country. A GDP inflation rate is based on the average change in the prices of a broad range of goods. The range is broader than in the case of the CPI and PPI, but it does not include imported goods and services.



key words

What are price deflators?

Price deflators express the price index in a different way. It is a statistical method used to turn nominal figures into real ones, in order to compare prices over time after inflation.

**TOOL 18: GROWTH IN SPENDING OVER TIME**

Aim: To work out if spending on a policy or programme has grown or shrunk over a specified number of years, in nominal and/or real terms.

Context: This tool can be applied individually or with a group. It can be used to investigate growth in allocations or actual spending figures.

How to use this tool

Step 1: Decide over which period of years you would like to compare spending on a given policy or programme.

Step 2: For each of these years, record the amount spent on the policy or programme you are monitoring.

Step 3: Now apply the following formula to calculate the growth rate between two years:

$$\text{growth rate} = \frac{(\text{amount in year 2} - \text{amount in year 1})}{\text{amount in year 1}} \times 100$$

Step 4: Use the same formula to calculate the growth rate from each year to the next you have chosen to focus on.

Step 5: If you have calculated the growth in nominal terms, you can repeat the whole exercise using real spending figures. Once inflation is taken into account, the growth rate is likely to look very different. For example, you could find that in nominal terms, a government's spending on a health policy has grown by 16% between 2005 and 2006. But in real terms, the growth rate may be much lower – or actually be negative.

**TOOL 19: PER CAPITA SPENDING**

Aim: To calculate how much is spent (or allocated) on average per person.

Context: This tool can be used by almost anyone with a calculator.

How to use this tool

Step 1: Find out how much was spent on the policy or programme you are monitoring.

Step 2: Find out how many people the resources were spent on.

Step 3: Divide the total amount spent by the number of people it was spent on.

Example:

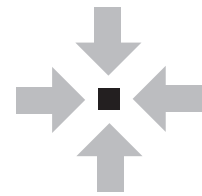
Imagine you are monitoring the implementation of a primary healthcare policy. To see whether resources are being distributed fairly, you decide to compare per capita spending between two provinces. As the policy is directed towards everyone in each province, you divide the total amount spent with the population of each province:

Per capita spending on primary healthcare in provinces P and Z

	Province P	Province Z
Total amount spent on primary healthcare	80,797,500	84,141,950
Total population of province	850,500	1,255,850
Per capita spending	95	67

The table shows that, even though more money is spent on primary healthcare in province Z than in province P, less is being spent per person. So people in province Z may not be receiving their fair share of the primary healthcare budget. There may be good reason for the discrepancy in per capita spending. For example, if province P has a much larger share of elderly people than province Z does, it would make sense to dedicate more funds per person to this province. On the other hand, it may also point to an unfair distribution of public resources.

interaction



ACTIVITY 1: MAKING BUDGET DECISIONS

Outcome: Participants understand that governments often have to make difficult trade-offs when allocating funds to different sectors, departments and policies.

Step 1: Divide participants into groups of six. Each person in the group is given a specific role to play. The roles to be distributed are:

- the Minister of Finance
- the Minister of Education
- the Minister of Health
- the Minister of Defence
- Representative of Civil Society
- Representative of the Private Sector

If participants cannot be divided into six, assign deputy ministers to the roles above. You could also add more ministries to the role-play and create briefs for them.

Step 2: Explain that the participants will soon be gathering together for an urgent budget meeting. In an unprecedented move, the government has invited representatives of civil society and the private sector to join in the meeting. Brief each participant for the meeting, either verbally or by giving them a photocopy of the cards below.

These pages offer some suggestions for facilitating a group discussion on the main themes raised in this chapter.

EXPLORING THE BUDGET DIMENSION

1. Making budget decisions
2. Identifying budget programmes

Minister of Finance

Your brief for this budget meeting

Your task during the meeting is to keep government spending below 90 million. You want all the ministries to achieve more with the funds they receive. You want to keep the private sector happy, but would like them to invest more in development. You think the civil society representative is a troublemaker but you are forced to hear his/her views.

Minister of Education

Your brief for this budget meeting

You want an increase in spending on education to 63 million for the year. You want to use these funds to improve schooling, especially at the secondary level. More children are enrolled at schools than ever before and you need to hire and train 600 more teachers. You also want to spend two million on an education campaign to keep girl children in school.

Minister of Agriculture

Your brief for this budget meeting

You want to see an increase in spending on agriculture to 60 million this year. You have spent a great deal on infrastructure and equipment for farmers and this investment will be lost unless you can back it up now with subsidies, irrigation and market transport. You feel the education ministry is always getting an overly big slice of the budget pie.

Minister of Defence

Your brief for this budget meeting

You want an increase in defence spending to 65 million for the upcoming year. The army must be modernised and the country is in dire need of two new aircraft to defend its citizens. You managed to stifle a recent riot when you could not pay soldiers' salaries in the western district – you do not want to see a repetition of this crisis elsewhere in the country.

Representative of Civil Society

Your brief for this budget meeting

Your task during this meeting is to support more spending on education and agriculture. You feel the government is spending too little on development and should be more responsive to communities' needs. You also think the Finance Minister is doing too much to appease the private sector and should take a stronger stand against the defence ministry.

Representative of the Private Sector

Your brief for this budget meeting

Your task during this meeting is to encourage the Ministry of Finance to keep a tight limit on government spending. You especially don't want to see government spending too much on agriculture, where you think market forces should be given more of a chance to have an impact. You do not think the private sector is responsible for development.

Step 3: Convene the meeting and sketch the following scenario for the participants:

- The government has gathered 100 million in revenue (from taxes and foreign aid) over the last year.
- Ten million is currently due in debt repayments.
- The purpose of this meeting is to decide how the available budget is to be used.

interaction

Step 4: Invite the Minister of Finance to chair the rest of the meeting. In each small group, all the participants should have a turn to argue their case. Each group should then write down how they propose to divide up the budget between the departments present.

Step 5: Ask each small group to present their proposed budgets to the larger group, who act as parliament and vote to pass it or not.

ACTIVITY 2: BUDGET PROGRAMMES

Outcome: Participants have identified the budget programmes through which funds are channelled for the implementation of the policy they have chosen to monitor.

Note: Make sure you have multiple copies of the relevant budget documents available for this activity. These are the documents in your country which contain the government's planned, allocated and/or actual spending figures for the sector(s) and/or departments relevant to your chosen policy.

Step 1: Hand out copies of the budget documents. If appropriate, invite participants to work in small groups of two to four people, sharing a set of documents.

Step 2: Discuss the difference between planned, allocated and actual expenditure. If necessary, use the information in unit 5.1 to explain and unpack these terms. Establish which of the budget documents in front of you contain which kind of expenditure information.

Step 3: Invite the small groups to sift through the budget documents and to identify the specific budget programmes that are relevant to the policy or policies they are interested in. This may be a relatively straightforward task (for example, if the policy is being rolled through one very clear budget programme). But it may be more complicated, especially if there are no budget programmes that overlap exactly with the policy.

Step 4: Ask the small groups to report back on the budget programmes they have identified. If there are discrepancies among the groups, unpack and discuss these. Ask them if there are sub-programmes or sub-sub-programmes within these that are particularly relevant to the policy. Decide which budget programmes give you the most clear picture of government spending on this policy.

Step 5: Working together, take a look at the line items or expenditure categories within the relevant budget programme(s) or sub-programme(s). What are these budget programmes made up of? Make a list of – or mark – those line items or categories that are especially relevant to the policy you are monitoring.

RECAP



Chapter 5: Analysing policy budgets

By now you should:

- become familiar with a range of basic budget terms and concepts
- investigated the budgets of the policy you are monitoring
- drawn conclusions about the way resources are being used to roll out the policy.

The next steps are to:

- ➔ decide what methods you will use to gather evidence about policy implementation
- ➔ plan how you will analyse the evidence you have gathered.

Chapter 6 will help you to complete these steps.

GATHERING EVIDENCE ON POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

6

This chapter aims to consider different ways of gathering and analysing evidence about a policy. It focuses on *how* you will monitor the policies and programmes you have identified. It explores the following questions:

- How can interviews help you to find out about policy implementation?
- What kinds of surveys are most often used to gather evidence about policies?
- How can you develop a survey of your own and analyse your findings?
- What can you learn about policy implementation through group discussions and observation?

The chapter includes the following tools:

TOOL 20: A LOW-TECH RANDOM SAMPLE

TOOL 21: PLANNING A SURVEY

TOOL 22: CREATING TABLES OR CHARTS TO SUMMARISE DATA

TOOL 23: AVERAGE, MEDIAN AND MODE

TOOL 24: ANALYSING DATA SETS

TOOL 25: SOCIAL MAPPING

TOOL 26: ANALYSING INTERVIEWS AND WORKSHOPS

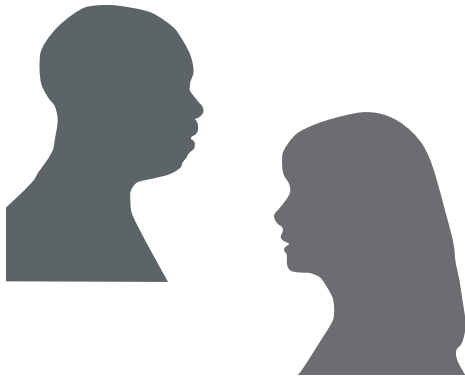
TOOL 27: ASKING WHY

The interaction pages present group activities that will help you to review the themes of the chapter. They will help you to:

- select methods to gather and analyse evidence about a policy
- identify the monitoring instruments you will need to create and
- draw up detailed action plans for your policy monitoring work.

Unit 6.1 Interviews

This unit aims to highlight the importance of interviews as the basic building block of most monitoring methods. Being able to ask good questions is critical to gathering evidence, whether you are engaging with citizens, service providers, government officials, donors, community members or anyone else. In every case, the way you ask questions will determine the quality of the answers you receive.



key words

What is an interview?

An interview is a discussion between two or more people. The aim is to gain information or a deeper understanding about a specific issue. An interview is usually initiated and led by someone who wants information (the interviewer). The questions are answered by people whose views or knowledge are being gathered (the respondents). Interviews can be conducted in person, via telephone, internet or postal correspondence.

Different types of interviews

Interviews can range from formal and pre-planned to more open-ended and conversational. They are usually divided into the following broad categories:

Structured interviews

What are they? These are question-and-answer sessions that follow a carefully planned order. The interviewer has a strict list of questions to pose to each respondent in exactly the same way order. The answers are strictly recorded, often using a survey questionnaire form (see unit 6.2 for more on surveys).

When are they suitable? Most useful when you want to gather specific, accurate details from many individuals in a consistent way. They help you to gather evidence that can readily be coded, counted and categorised.

Unstructured interviews

What are they? These are conversations in which the interviewer guides the discussion, while allowing the respondents to 'tell their own story'. He or she usually has some questions in mind beforehand, but will adjust these as the interview unfolds. An important part of unstructured interviewing is to probe: this means asking respondents to explain or expand on what they have said to gain more understanding and insight.

When are they suitable? Best suited to gathering evidence on complex or sensitive topics and when you want to understand the dynamics and experiences involved. They also work well when you want a variety of perspectives.

Semi-structured interviews

What are they? Semi-structured interviews fall somewhere between the other two approaches. The interviewer is likely to have a pre-planned list of questions, but may adjust the order and emphasis to probe deeper.

When are they suitable? They are ideal when you hope to gain understanding of the respondents' different views, but also want some consistent, comparable data to tabulate. Possibly the most time-consuming approach, because it tries to cover a pre-determined set of questions while also allowing space for further discussion.

Ways of asking questions

There are a number of ways to ask a question about the same topic. Here are some options to think about when planning an interview, designing a survey or planning the agenda for group discussions:

Open questions: Allow the respondent to answer in his or her own words. He or she is not prompted to answer in any particular format. For example:

**What do you think about the services being provided at this facility?
Why are many children in this community not attending school?**

Closed questions: Provide the respondent with a limited range of responses to choose from. This is often called a multiple choice question. For example:

Do you think the services provided at this facility are:

- a) excellent
- b) good
- c) bad
- d) dreadful

50/50 questions: The respondent is given a statement or range of statements and is asked to decide whether s/he agrees or disagrees with each, or whether each is true or false. There are only two possible responses to each question. For example:

The services you received today were delivered in a friendly, professional manner. True or false?

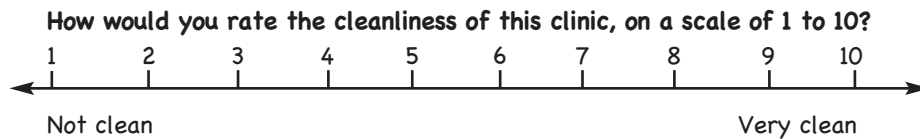
Tick all that apply: This closed question format asks the respondent to choose more than one response from a range of possibilities. Unlike the multiple choice example above, the respondent is invited to mark all the responses that are true of his or her situation. For example:

Your child is not currently attending school because:

- the distance to school is too far
- you cannot afford the school fees
- you cannot afford transport costs
- he or she has no school uniform
- he or she is needed at home
- he or she is ill.

Ranking and scoring: Questions that use ranking and scoring are useful for learning more about the relative importance people attach to different things. They can also reveal respondents' preferences and how they make choices. For example, the question above about school attendance could ask respondents to rank the reasons in the list from the most to least important obstacle. Respondents could also be asked to give each reason a score (say, between 1 and 50) that reflects how important it is as an obstacle. Scoring gives you slightly more information than ranking, because it asks the respondent to give a precise weighting to each factor.

Rating: Rating is similar to scoring, but instead of scoring a whole range of possible factors or responses (to find out their relative importance), rating questions ask the person to evaluate a single factor. For example:



Coding answers to questions

To record evidence in a quantitative way, it needs to be counted or coded in numbers. This can be built into the design of your questions and answers (which is called pre-coding). Closed questions tend to be pre-coded. For example, in relation to a policy on security, you may ask the following question:

What do you think about the performance of the police in this city?

Very good 1 good 2 fair 3 poor 4 very poor 5

Pre-coding is also possible when you are using observation to gather evidence. For example, in order to track an education policy, monitors could be asked to sit in on a number of primary school classes. They could then use the following system to encode what they observe:

How much time did the teacher spend on each of the following in class?

Hours

Minutes

- 1. Listening to pupils _____
- 2. Presenting to the class _____
- 3. Talking to the pupils _____
- 4. Answering pupils' questions _____
- 5. Giving instructions _____
- 6. Correcting pupils' work _____
- 7. Observing small group/pair work _____
- 8. Doing nothing _____

Open questions are answered in respondents' own words. These answers can be coded afterwards (which is called post-coding). This involves assigning number values to different responses or themes so that they can be counted and compared. For example, imagine you are monitoring a policy on police conduct and you have already gathered peoples' ideas and opinions. You could give a certain number value to every response that highlights police violence, and another value to responses that draw attention to corruption of police officials.



key words

What is a survey? What is a questionnaire?

Surveys are closely linked to structured interviews. The interview is the process and the survey is the main instrument used to structure and record information. On a survey form, you usually see questions followed by spaces or blocks for recording the answers given by respondents. In this toolkit, the terms *survey* and *questionnaire* are used interchangeably to refer to this kind of document or form.

Scale and costs of surveys

Surveys can be expensive to undertake on a large scale. Some CSOs have used community networks and their own survey tools to keep costs down. Yet it remains a challenge to plan a survey with a large enough sample to be credible – but also small enough to be affordable and manageable.



dig deeper

Find out more about PETS from:

- www.u4.no/themes/pets/petseducationsector.cfm
- www.hakielimu.org/WP/WPSeries7_2004.pdf
- <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTPUBLICSECTORANDGOVERNANCE/0,,contentMDK:20235447~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:286305,00.html>

Unit 6.2 Surveys

This unit aims to investigate how surveys can be used to monitor policies. Surveys are useful when you want to gather specific information from a large number of people which can then be translated into statistical evidence. The design of the survey is vital because it determines what kind of findings will flow from it. So the better its design, the more compelling your evidence will be.

What could you use surveys for?

Outside the realm of policy monitoring, surveys are used in all kinds of ways. For example:

- researchers conduct public opinion surveys
- companies use them for market research
- governments use them to carry out a census.

Over recent years, more and more civil society organisations have begun to use surveys to monitor government spending and policy implementation. The following discussion looks at two types of surveys used by CSOs.

Public expenditure tracking surveys (PETS)

PETS are used to find out whether public funds have been spent in line with government policies, and if not, to establish where and why not. Monitors track the release of funds from the original allocation right through to the levels of government where they are supposed to be turned into goods and services (usually the local level). They monitor how much of the promised resources actually reach the right level (and how much seeps away), as well as the time it takes for resources to flow through the government bureaucracy. Information is collected from different sources, including those providing public services, and from local and more central government levels. So far, PETS have been used most often to monitor the implementation of health and education policies.



case study

Monitoring the finances of primary schools in Uganda

The first PETS survey was conducted in Uganda in 1996. The aim was to gather information from primary schools to see how much of the money intended for schools actually reached them. The survey revealed that, on average between 1991 and 1995, schools received only 13 per cent of their allocated funds (excluding wages). It also found that there were large variations in money being misused or not even making it to different schools. It was also clear that the funds being directed away from education were not being spent on other important pro-poor functions. Most disappeared into the government or political bureaucracy, or was used by officials for personal gain. After the survey findings were made public, the Ugandan government responded by creating greater budget transparency. Several district education officers were prosecuted. The transfer of public funds to the district level was published in newspapers and broadcast on the radio. Schools were required to post information on the funds they received so that the public could play a more active role in monitoring public resources. These reforms appear to have had the desired effect. The flow of funds for education improved dramatically, with schools receiving around 80 per cent of their allocated amounts in 2001.

Source: http://poverty2.forumone.com/files/15109_PETS_Case_Study.pdf

Citizen's report cards

This way of using surveys was pioneered by the Public Affairs Centre in Bangalore, India. Since then, variations have been used by CSOs in many African countries, such as Malawi, Ghana and Uganda. Citizen's report cards are known under many names, including citizen feedback surveys, citizen scorecards and citizen satisfaction surveys. Whatever the name, the aim is usually to collect feedback from service users on the quantity and/or quality of specific government services they have received. They are also used to gather evidence on the performance of service providers and/or to compare performance across service providers.



dig deeper

Find out more about citizen's reports cards from

www.citizenreportcard.com/ind ex.html



case study

Measuring satisfaction with the public services in Zanzibar

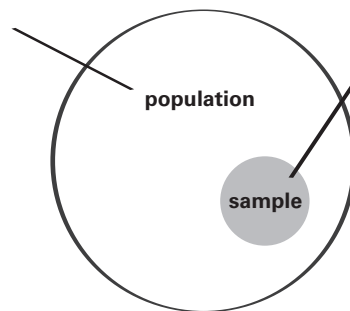
In 2004 a survey was conducted in Zanzibar to monitor the implementation of water and education policies. The project involved stakeholders from the government statistical office, government departments, the Public Affairs Centre of India, as well as CSOs based in Zanzibar. Two districts were selected for the survey: one urban and one rural. A sample group of 1,015 households was interviewed. The survey questionnaire recorded information about the interview time and place, the demographic and socio-economic background of the person being interviewed, and feedback from the respondent on the accessibility, use, quality, cost and reliability of services. Using closed questions, respondents were asked whether they were highly satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied or highly dissatisfied with the services they used (there was also a 'don't know' option). The survey revealed some stark differences between the delivery of services in the rural and urban districts. They also revealed that a larger share of women-headed than man-headed households found cost was an obstacle to accessing services. This survey findings helped form policy recommendations which groups advocated for government to adopt .

Source: [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPCENG/1143141-1116501474243/20507530/Zanzibar\[1\].ppt](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPCENG/1143141-1116501474243/20507530/Zanzibar[1].ppt)

What is a survey sample?

In some cases, it may be possible to conduct a survey with every person or agency you need to gather evidence from. For example, if you are undertaking a PETS with police stations in a particular district, it may be feasible to have a structured interview with an officer from each station. However, it may be that there are just too many people who could be interviewed as part of your survey. When it comes to citizen report cards, for instance, it is usually not possible to conduct a survey with every person affected by a programme or policy. To address this problem, surveys can be conducted with a *sample* of people:

The **population** is the total number of units (people or households, for example) that are the focus of your survey. If you are gathering evidence on household income in a district, the population would consist of all the households in the district.



The **sample** is a smaller sub-section of the population that can be taken to represent the characteristics and responses of the entire population. So if you are monitoring household income in a particular district, the sample would consist of a certain number of selected households in that district.



dig deeper

Find out more about these and other methods for constructing samples from www.statpac.com/surveys/sampling.htm.

How to choose a sample for your survey?

There are several ways to select a sample. For example, imagine you want to gather the views of people receiving free seeds and fertiliser in a certain community. You establish that there are 800 people receiving seeds and fertiliser, but you are only able to interview 200 of them. Which 200 do you choose?

- In a random sample:** All those included in the survey population (see the chart above) have the same chance to be selected. Their odds of being selected are known (in the example above, the odds are 200/800 – that is, a 25 per cent chance).
Example: You pick 200 people (out of the possible 800) at random (for instance, by drawing names 'out of a hat').
- In a systematic sample:** Every tenth unit is selected from the survey population. As long as the list the units are selected from does not have a hidden order, this method is very similar to the random sample.
Example: You pick people according to a counting pattern. A 25 per cent chance of being picked is the same as picking one out of four persons. So every fourth person out of the total 800 should be picked to be included in the sample.
- In a stratified sample:** The population is divided into groups with different characteristics and a random sample is then taken from each group. The first step is to define the characteristics of the different groups. The second is to divide the survey population into those groups. Finally, the random sample is then selected from each group.
Example: You select 200 people to reflect certain characteristics (eg, gender, age and/or economic status) of the larger population. From each group, you select a random sample.

TOOL 20: A LOW-TECH RANDOM SAMPLE

Aim: To select a random sample for a survey without help from technology.

Context: This tool provides a useful way to show people who may not be computer literate or who may not have access to technology that they can also use samples and surveys.

How to use this tool

Step 1: Establish the size of your survey population. Remember the unit of analysis for your survey could be individuals, households, organisations, facilities, parishes, etc. For the purposes of this exercise, let's say you could potentially gather evidence from 300 households.

Step 2: Decide what portion of the entire survey population you want to include in your sample. For example, you could agree on a sample of 100 households.

Step 3: Make a list of the 300 households and give each a number from one to 300.

Step 4: Cut out 300 pieces of paper and write the numbers one to 300 on them.

Step 5: Place the 300 pieces of paper in a bag and, wearing a blindfold, draw 100 numbers out of the bag. Your sample group is made up of the 100 households on your list that match the numbers you have drawn out of the bag.



case study

Choosing a sample of citizens to survey in Malawi

In 2003, the Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN) investigated the level of citizen satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) with the quality of public services. Using the citizen's report card approach, they decided to conduct a survey with just over 1,000 respondents in different parts of the country. The table below explains how they constructed their sample.

Narrowing down the survey sample	How MEJN did it
Choosing districts to include in the sample	The MEJN wanted to select districts in a way that would reflect the characteristics the country's three regions. They looked at the distribution of the population across all three and at the balance of urban and rural people living in each. They then selected six districts to mirror these basic characteristics. For example, they chose three districts in the southern region (where almost half Malawi's population lives) and only one district in the northern region (home to only 12 per cent of the population).
Choosing wards within each district	A total of 30 wards were randomly selected to form part of the sample. The number of wards selected in each district again matched the distribution of the population across the country. So for example, 14 of the sample wards were located in the southern region.
Choosing villages within the wards	Three villages were randomly selected in each rural ward. For urban areas, MEJN used data from the National Statistics Office to select three demarcated areas in each urban ward. A total of 90 sites were identified for the sample.
Choosing households	The survey was conducted with 12 households in each village/urban area. To select which households to survey, the chief's residence was used as a starting point and the monitors used systematic sampling to count households from there.
Choosing whom to interview in each household	The survey was conducted with men and women separately, wherever feasible. As far as possible, interviews were held with an adult female in the first, third, fifth, seventh, ninth and eleventh households in each village, and with an adult male in the other households.

Context: You can work individually or as a group to plan a survey of your own. What kind of survey would work best?

Whether you want to conduct a survey in the form of a Citizen's report card, a PETS or any other kind, you can use this same basic process to plan your survey step by step. What will differ are the questions you ask and the people you select as respondents.



dig deeper

You can find out more about designing survey questionnaires from www.accesscable.net/~infopoll/tips.htm



TOOL 21: PLANNING A SURVEY

Aim: To enable you to construct and conduct your own survey.

How to use this tool

Step 1: Clarify the purpose and scope of the survey. If you have worked through the chapters of this toolkit, you should already have a clear sense of what you want to gather evidence about in your survey. (Refer back to the monitoring objectives you formulated in chapter 4.)

Step 2: Draw in skills and expertise. Using surveys requires some special skills. You do not have to be an expert yourself, but it will be necessary to draw in people with experience in statistical research along the way.

Step 3: Identify who you will gather evidence from:

- If you are planning to conduct a **citizen's report card** or satisfaction survey, look at the information on sample surveys and decide how you will construct your sample. The evidence you gather with a survey will only be seen as representative of a wider population if your sample has been chosen very carefully. You may want to get help from a statistics expert with experience in constructing reliable samples.
- If you are planning to **track public expenditure** with your survey, make a list of the officials, front-end service providers and others you will interview.

Step 4: Design a draft survey questionnaire. The way you formulate the questions for your survey will determine what kind of evidence you will gather. Use the information in unit 6.1 to consider different ways of phrasing your questions. Many surveys rely largely on closed questions, which make it easier to code and tabulate the responses. It is also useful to think about the order of the questions. The answer to one question could have a bearing on the way you ask the next one. Remember that completing a survey can be time-consuming, so keep it as short as possible. Have a look at some surveys that have been used by other CSOs to monitor policies and if possible, talk to them about what they have learnt.

Step 5: Get feedback and/or test your questionnaire. Ask different stakeholders to have a look at your draft questionnaire and have it checked by someone experienced in drafting surveys. Pre-test your questionnaire with a few people from your target sample to make sure all the questions are understood and flow well in order. Check that the survey makes adequate provision for recording answers and other information.

Step 6: Recruit and train monitors/interviewers. Depending on the scale of your survey, you may need to identify and train people to help you conduct the survey. You could contract a professional survey agency to do this work, or build the skills of CSOs to undertake this kind of work. Monitors should be equipped with skills in communication, interviewing and recording information. They should understand how essential it is to ensure accurate and reliable data and know how to act ethically in interview situations.

Step 7: Carry out the survey. This part of the survey process usually involves sending monitors or interviewers out into the field to gather information from the targeted respondents. The monitors follow the question schedule on the questionnaire and record the responses.

Step 8: Compile the data. Once the surveys have been conducted, the responses have to be tabulated. This means recording all the responses in tables, so that you can group them together in a way that will help you to analyse them later (see unit 6.3). This is ideally done with the aid of a computer, but it can also be managed on paper. Either way, it is essential for the data to be recorded accurately and this can be a meticulous, painstaking task. It is best tackled by people within or outside your network who have some experience in working with large sets of data.

Note: This tool is inspired and informed in part by a web-based self-learning course, *Improving Local Governance and Service Delivery: Citizen Report Card Learning Tool Kit*. The full resource is available at www.citizenreportcard.com/index.html.

Unit 6.3 Analysing survey data and other coded information

This unit aims to introduce some basic methods to analyse the data recorded during a survey. The same tools can be applied to any other coded information.

Why it is helpful to code information

When information is coded, it means that number values have been assigned to different categories of data. For example, wherever people have chosen the same answer to a closed question in a survey, their responses are given the same number value. In principle, you can assign number values to any evidence you have gathered, even from focus group discussions or other less structured methods (though this may call for assistance from someone with expertise in data analysis).

When evidence is expressed in the form of numbers, it makes it easier to work with large volumes of information. It also allows you to use the data in useful ways:

- **You can easily summarise and present the information in several ways.** For example, even if you have 50,000 responses to a question, the fact that they are coded in numbers helps you to count up and portray your findings in a concise and straightforward way – see TOOL 22.
- **You can highlight some of the features of a particular category of information.** For example, you can calculate the average across a range of responses, identify which response lies in the middle (the median), or the most popular responses (the mode) – see TOOL 23.
- **You can compare the relationship between different sets of information.** For instance, the coding of the information can help you to work out if there are any overlaps between people's responses to two (or more) questions – see TOOL 24.

The tools presented in this unit provide more guidance on how to tackle the tasks above. They can be explained more clearly by using a practical example as a basis.

Example: A survey on the use of public transport services

Imagine you have carried out a survey to monitor people's use of, and satisfaction with, public transport. You conducted the survey with 20 people who regularly use public transport. (In reality, you are unlikely to run a survey with only 20 people, but for the purposes of explaining the methods below, a small sample size is more workable). There were four questions in the survey questionnaire:

Question 1: How would you rate the quality of public transport?

excellent good fair poor

Question 2: Is the public transport you use run by the government or a private company?

government private company

Question 3: What is the average distance (to the nearest kilometre) you travel on public transport each day?

5km or less 5-10km 11-20km more than 20km

Question 4: How much money do you spend per week on public transport?
(Fill in the amount)

What resources can help you to analyse data?

For basic calculations and graphs, Microsoft Excel provides useful tools. There are also specialised statistical computer programmes, such as the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), Statistical Analysis System (SAS) or Stata. You can download some free statistical software packages from the internet. But even without access to any such programmes, you can still analyse the data in many ways. If possible, make sure that your analysis team includes someone with experience in statistics.

Since conducting the survey, you have used a table to record all the responses of the 20 individuals in your sample group:

Individual surveyed	Answers to question 1	Answers to question 2	Answers to question 3	Answers to question 4
1. Feimata	Fair	Private company	11-20 km	70
2. Tau	Excellent	Private company	5 km or less	20
3. Yeshi	Good	Government	5-10 km	50
4. Gebre	Good	Private company	5-10 km	75
5. Chewe	Poor	Government	More than 20 km	15
6. Gzifa	Fair	Government	11-20 km	30
7. Hamidi	Fair	Government	11-20 km	15
8. Ramakeele	Poor	Private company	More than 20 km	300
9. Dinari	Good	Government	5-10 km	50
10. Runako	Excellent	Private company	5 km or less	20
11. Udako	Excellent	Private company	5-10 km	40
12. Kajumba	Poor	Government	More than 20 km	110
13. Idowu	Good	Government	5 km or less	15
14. Baba	Good	Government	5 km or less	20
15. Adebanke	Fair	Government	More than 20 km	70
16. Leabua	Poor	Government	11-20 km	40
17. Zwena	Fair	Government	11-20 km	40
18. Penda	Good	Private company	5 km or less	30
19. Minkah	Excellent	Private company	5-10 km	40
20. Saran	Poor	Private company	11-20 km	50

You are now in a position to analyse this information in a number of ways. The methods used to summarise and compare data can vary widely. More advanced methods – such as regression analysis (see the key words box) – must be undertaken with the help of a computer-based statistical programme and corresponding expertise. The tools included in this chapter can be undertaken on paper – but would also be much quicker and easier if you have help from a statistical programme on computer.



dig deeper

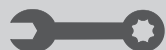
Find out more about regression analysis at http://dss.princeton.edu/online_help/analysis/regression_intro.htm



key words

What is regression analysis?

Regression analysis is a statistical tool used by economists, medical scientists, social scientists and others. It is used to estimate the correlation between dependent variable and one (or many) independent variables. An independent variable is typically the cause, while dependent variables are usually effects. If unemployment is thought to cause crime rates to increase, unemployment is the independent variable (it can be high or low) and crime rates the dependent variable.



TOOL 22: CREATING TABLES OR CHARTS TO SUMMARISE DATA

Aim: To summarise and convey the responses to a survey or other coded information in an accessible way.

Context: This tool is best used individually. The easiest way is with the help of a computer, although a meticulous worker would be able to draw them by hand, too.

How to use this tool:

Step 1: Ensure that the information you want to summarise has been captured in a table or spreadsheet.

Step 2: Choose one question to focus on at a time. For example, let's take a closer look at the responses to question 1 in the example questionnaire on public transport: *How would you rate the quality of public transport?*

Step 3: Identify how *all* the people in a sample group responded to this single question. For example, by looking at the table on page 78, you can quickly calculate that out of 20 people, four rated the quality of public transport as excellent, while six thought it was good, five said it was fair and another five rated it as poor.

Step 4: Choose a format to present this finding. Three options are illustrated here: a frequency table, pie chart and bar chart. Check the dig deeper box for examples of other types of charts.

Frequency tables

This is how the information about question 1 can be presented in a frequency table:

Question 1	Answer	Frequency (number of people)
How would you rate the quality of public transport?	excellent	20% (4)
	good	30% (6)
	fair	25% (5)
	poor	25% (5)
	Total	100% (20)

A frequency table shows the percentages of people who gave the same responses to a question, as well as the number of people that make up each share. They can be used to summarise the proportional breakdown of all kinds of information. For example, you could create a frequency table to set out what share of the participants in a workshop belonged to different age groups, or worked at different service points.



dig deeper

Find out more about charts from:

- the chart wizard feature of the computer programme Microsoft Excel
- www.enterprise-impact.org.uk (Choose toolbox, then 'thinking it through: using diagrams in impact assessment'.)

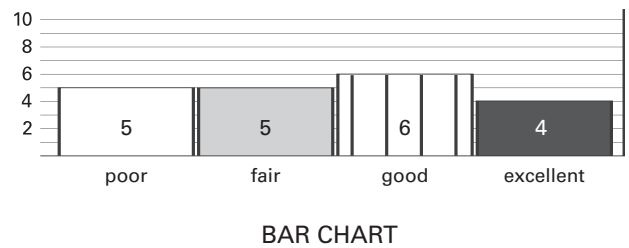
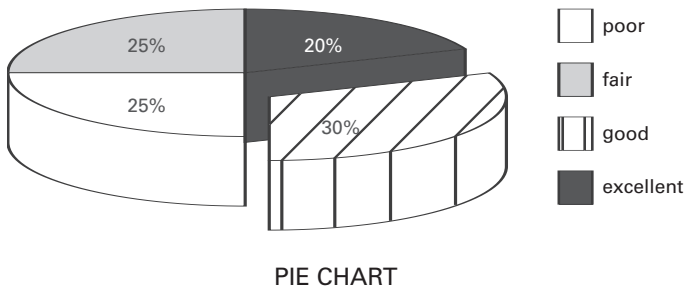
Preparing for an analysis meeting or workshop

While gathering evidence, you probably recorded a lot of information on paper or on computer. It is essential to present this information in a format that will allow you (and others) to interact with it. For example, imagine you gathered evidence by carrying out a survey of 500 people. You are now hosting a workshop with 20 participants to discuss the evidence from it. How can the participants gain a sense of what was recorded in the surveys? It would be time-consuming and impractical for all 20 participants first to read through all 500 survey forms. Even if the survey responses have been tabulated on computer, asking participants to read through all the data is still not the best use of your collective time. What you need, instead, is to organise, summarise and present the survey data so that participants can immediately grasp what they reveal. TOOL 22 can be used to summarise data for an analysis meeting or workshop – or to help you present your final evidence to powerful stakeholders.

Charts

Many different kinds of charts can be used to display survey data and other coded information. These examples illustrate how the responses to question 1 can be summarised and presented in a visual way that is quick and easy to understand:

Question1: How would you rate the quality of public transport?



TOOL 23: AVERAGE, MEDIAN AND MODE

Aim: To calculate the average, median and mode response to a survey question or another category of coded information.

Context: This tool can be used individually or with a group. It is useful for those interested in this kind of work to understand all three of these terms and how to calculate them.

- The **average** is the sum of all responses divided by the number of responses.
- The **median** is the number that separates the higher half of a sample from the lower half.
- The **mode** is the most commonly observed response.

How to use this tool:

To illustrate this tool, consider the responses given to question 4 of the example survey: *How much money do you spend per week on public transport?*

Working out the average

Step 1: Add up the amounts given by all the respondents: the total is 1,100.
 Step 2: Divide this figure by the number of responses (20): the answer is 55. So for this sample of commuters, the average amount spent per week on transport was 55.

Working out the median

Step 1: Arrange all the amounts given by respondents in order, from the lowest (15) to the highest (300). Your series of amounts will look as follows:

15 15 15 20 20 20 30 30 40 **40 40** 40 50 50 50 110 70 70 75 300

Step 2: Identify the amount(s) that fall right in the middle of the sequence. In this case there are two responses that lie in the middle: both have a value of 40.

When would you use average, median or mode?

- Calculating an average can help you to compare general trends, for example average weight of a sample of children from different ethnic groups
- The median is useful to calculate because it reveals whether the average is distorted by some responses that are atypical. For example, in the responses to question 4 of the survey, the median was quite a bit lower than the average.
- It makes sense to calculate the mode when you want to know which response was most common or popular.

Working out the mode

Step 1: Divide the responses into groups. All similar responses go into the same group.

15	20	30	40	50	110	70	75	300
15	20	30	40	50		70		
15	20		40	50				
			40					

Step 2: Observe which group contains the most responses. In this case the mode is 40.



TOOL 24: ANALYSING DATA SETS

Aim: To analyse the responses to two or more sets of information to see how they relate.

Context: This tool is most often used individually. However, the frequency tables can be prepared in advance and then analysed with a group, as long as the facilitator(s) are good at analysing data.

How to use this tool with a group:

The explanation that follows draws on the responses to questions 1 to 3 of the mock survey on public transport (see page 78). Naturally, it would be necessary to adapt your own analysis to the findings of your own survey.

Step 1: Prepare the frequency tables comparing two or more sets of information in advance.

Step 2: When you meet together, draw participants' attention to the way people answered question 1 of the survey: The respondents were divided in their views on the quality of public transport. Suggest to the group that this is interesting: Why were some people satisfied while others were not? Ask them why they think people may have had such different views.

Step 3: Explain that you can try to shed light on this puzzle by comparing the respondents' answers to more than one question. The aim is to see whether people's responses to another question helps to explain their diverse views on question 1.

How all respondents answered questions 1 and 2

		Question 2: Is the public transport you use government or private?	
		private company	government
Question 1: How would you rate the quality of public transport?	excellent/good	6 people: Tau, Gebre, Runako, Udako, Penda, Minkah 67%	4 people: Yeshe, Dinari, Idowu, Baba 36%
	fair/poor	3 people: Feimata, Ramakeele, Saran 33%	7 people: Chewe, Gzifa, Hamidi, Kajumba, Adebanke, Leabua, Zwena 64%
	Total	100% 9 people	100% 11 people

This row contains all ten people who rated the quality of public transport as excellent or good. Here they are divided into two groups: those who use transport run by a private company and those who use transport run by government.

In this row, the ten people who rated the quality of public transport as fair to poor are divided into those who use transport run by a private company and those who use government-run transport.

Total number of people = 20

This column shows the responses of the nine people who said that they use privately-run public transport. Six thought the quality of public transport was excellent or good, and three thought it was fair or poor.

This column gives a breakdown of the 11 people who travel on government-run transport. Four of these thought the quality of public transport was excellent or good, while seven said it was fair or poor.

Step 4: Show the participants the frequency table you have drawn up to compare the responses to question 1 and question 2. Point to different parts of the table to explain how you divided up the data:

Step 5: Show the participants where the percentages in the table come from.

When you cross-reference people's responses to the two questions, you can see that 67 per cent of the people (six out of nine) using transport run by private companies rate the quality as excellent or good. On the other hand, of the people using transport run by the government, only 36 (four out of 11) per cent rated it as excellent or good.

Step 6: Invite the participants to ask questions of clarification and to comment on these findings. What do they suggest? Are private transport companies doing a better job than the government in providing transport to commuters? Facilitate a few minutes of discussion before suggesting that you could add another angle to the analysis by bringing in people's responses to question 3 of the example survey: *What is the average distance you travel with public transport each day?*

Step 7: Explain to participants that it is possible to compare people's responses to all three questions by breaking the data up in a logical way. Show them the next frequency table and make clear that it is only about the ten people who said they travelled 10km or less each day. Point to different parts of the table and explain how you arrived at the division of data:

		Question 2: Is the public transport you use government or private?	
		private company	government
Question 1: How would you rate the quality of public transport?	excellent/good	6 people: Tau, Gebre, Runako, Udako, Penda, Minkah 100%	4 people: Yeshi, Dinari, Idowu, Baba 100%
	fair/poor	0 people 0%	0 people 0%
	Total	100% 6 people	100% 4 people



This column shows that of the six people who said they made use of transport run by a private company (and travelled 10km or less per day), all six rated the quality of transport as excellent or good.



This column shows that all four people who said they used government transport (and travelled 10km or less per day) also thought the quality of transport was excellent or good.

The responses of people who travel 10km or less per day

Step 8: Now show participants the frequency table based on the responses of those who reported travelling 11km or more per day. Again, only ten respondents are represented in this table. Point to the figures in the table and explain once again how you calculated them:

The responses of people who travel 11km or more per day

		Question 2: Is the public transport you use government or private?	
		private company	government
Question 1: How would you rate the quality?	excellent/good	0 people 100%	0 people 100%
	fair/poor	3 people: Feimata, Ramakeele, Saran 100%	7 people: Chewe, Gzifa, Hamidi, Kajumba, Adebanke, Leabua, Zwena 100%
	Total	100% 3 people	100% 7 people

↑
This column sets out that there were three people who said they travelled 11km or more per day and did so on transport run by a private company. Of these three respondents, all rated the quality of the transport as fair or poor.

↑
This column shows that there were seven people who made use of government-run public transport to travel 11km or more per day. Again, all of them rated the quality of public transport as fair or poor.

Step 9: Suggest to the participants that adding the third set of responses has shed a different light on your findings. Invite them to ask questions of clarification and to discuss what the findings reveal. It should be clear that the survey revealed:

- People’s satisfaction with the quality of public transport was strongly influenced by the distances they travelled per day.
- Those who travelled short distances all rated the quality of public transport as excellent or good – whether it was a government or private company.
- Those who travelled long distances all rated the quality of public transport as fair or poor – and there was no difference in satisfaction between those using government services or privately-run services.

Step 10: Conclude by explaining that you could take the analysis a step further by adding people’s responses to question 4. (It would become a bit too complex and messy to explain here, though!) The example so far should give participants a basic understanding of how it is possible to compare different categories of information to see how they relate.



dig deeper

Find out more about analysing survey data from:

www.citizenreportcard.com/index.html – a very good online course published in partnership by the Public Affairs Centre (PAC) in Bangalore, India, the Asian Development Bank and Asian Development Institute.

Unit 6.4 Workshops, focus group discussions and observation

This unit aims to examine what methods you can use to gather qualitative evidence about policy implementation.

Group discussion

Discussing a programme or policy with a group is useful to understand the experiences, obstacles or issues involved. This method relies on semi-structured or unstructured interviews. The facilitator steers the discussion towards certain themes or topics but also allows the participants to take the lead in exchanging their views and introducing related issues (see the box on facilitation with evidence in mind). The term 'workshop' is often used to refer to any kind of group meeting where people participate to achieve a specific goal. There are two main types of workshops frequently used to gather information:

- **Mixed or multi-stakeholder workshops:** Ideal for gaining insight into the different interests and perspectives that have a bearing on a policy or programme. For example, to discuss an education policy, it could be fruitful to have a meeting with a mixed group of parents, scholars, principals, teachers, education officials, teachers' union representatives and administrative school staff. While separate discussions with these groups can provide valuable information, hosting them together is likely to reveal more about the dynamics, conflicts and synergies among the various role-players. These relationships – and the issues underpinning them – can, of course, make or break the success of policy implementation.
- **Focus group discussions:** Workshops held with participants who have a common interest. For example, they may be part of a specific social category (such as young adults), an interest group (such as environmentalists) or an occupation (such as farm workers). There is no fixed rule about the number of people to include, but a good size is often between five and 14. Focus group discussions work best when you want to gather substantial information from a specific group on a topic that is directly relevant to their lives. So, for example, to unravel why a given health policy is struggling to make a difference, you could facilitate a series of focus group discussion with nurses working in rural clinics.



dig deeper

Find out more about focus group discussions from:

- www.unu.edu/unupress/food2/UIN03E/UIN03E00.htm
- www.chronicpoverty.org/CPTtoolbox/FGD_Interview_Methods.htm

Participation in group discussions

One of the challenges (and opportunities) posed by group discussions and workshops is being able to hear the views of those usually excluded from policy debates. These could, for example, be women, people with disabilities or refugees. So it is important to think carefully about the composition of those attending and to manage the power dynamics so that everyone can participate fully and have their say.

Seeing the whole picture

Observation is a way of gaining knowledge about a situation or community by watching it 'as it functions'. All the other methods discussed in this chapter involve asking people questions. This means they step outside their normal activities, even if only for the brief time it takes to complete a survey. When asked to reflect on their everyday experiences, people sometimes give answers or comments that they think are expected of them. Observation, on the other hand, is about watching what people do in their usual routines and practices. For example, you could visit ten clinics and record how many people visit each clinic over a set time period, how they arrive, what they do while waiting to be helped, how they cope with the heat, who is allowed to go to the front of the queue, how long it takes on average for each person to be attended to and soon. Observation is a popular method of monitoring during elections. Observers usually visit polling stations to record what they see, taking note of anything that may be out of step with electoral policy. Observation can be combined with other methods, such as group discussions and interviews, to write a case study. For example, you could undertake an in-depth case study of how a policy has affected a particular community or group.

TOOL 25: SOCIAL MAPPING

Aim: To work as a group to create a visual representation of what a policy means in practical terms at the local community level.

Context: Diagrams and maps of different kinds can be powerful vehicles for focus group discussions. People often find it easier to think together when there is a visual image to hold and organise their contributions. Social mapping is one such visual tool. It is particularly well suited to exploring questions of access to services and the distribution of resources – and how these may impact on policy implementation. Although the tool was developed for use in rural areas, where settlements are usually more spread out and constant, it can also be used to map services in urban areas.

How to use this tool with a group:

Step 1: Introduce the tool by explaining to participants that a social map is a drawing of a residential area, be it a village, suburb or neighbourhood. It is created by a group.

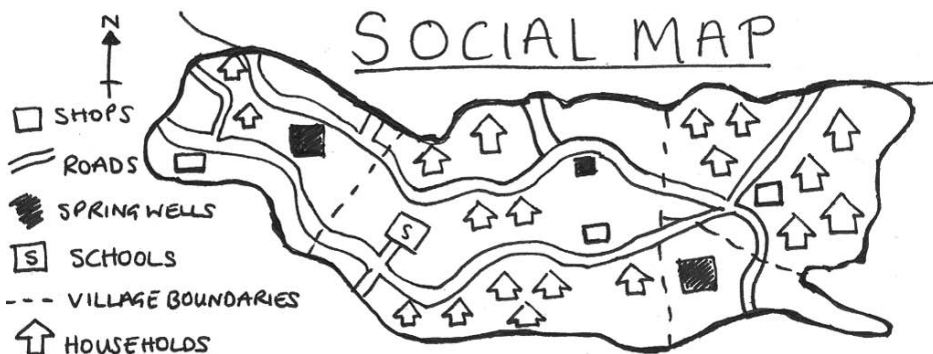
Step 2: Depending on the policy you are monitoring, you will be interested in seeing how the group depicts specific social services or facilities. You will need to adapt your instructions accordingly. In broad terms, this step involves asking participants to draw a map of the area where they live. Typically, a social map shows:

- the boundaries of an area
- local facilities such as schools, health centres or clinics, places of worship, shops, etc
- transport routes and access to these facilities as well as resources like water and firewood
- if feasible, the distribution of households or residential areas within the map.

Step 3: Ensure that the participants have the materials they need to complete the map. It can be drawn on paper, chalkboard or on the ground (and later copied onto paper). Symbols and colours are often used to mark different kinds of facilities and households.

Step 4: Invite participants to present their social maps. In discussing their contributions, facilitate discussion about the patterns of access to resources and services in the given area. For example, if you are hoping to understand the implications of a particular health policy at the local level, this tool can be used to identify the practical problems contributing to ill health and obstructing access to health services.

Example



Source: The description of social mapping was informed by the tools appendix of *Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation of Community and Faith-based Programs*, CORE Initiative (Washington DC, 2004)

dig deeper

Many other diagram and mapping tools have been developed under the themes of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and Participatory Poverty Appraisal (PPA). Collect ideas for adapting these and other diagram tools by visiting these sites:

- www.livelihoods.org/info/tools/Diagrams.html
- www.iisd.org/casl/CASLGuide/RepRel.htm

Facilitating with evidence in mind

Different group processes call for different styles of facilitation. For example, if the aim of a workshop is to strengthen relationships between participants, the direction the conversation takes is not that important, as long as people are engaging with each other in a new way. If, on the other hand, the aim of a workshop is to gather evidence about a policy, it is important to ensure that you end up with the kind of information you need. Here are some tips to keep in mind:

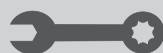
- Explain clearly what the workshop is about.
- If possible, display the workshop aim in words on a flip chart and gently steer the discussion back to this core focus whenever participants stray too far from it.
- Open questions encourage more discussion than closed ones.
- Encourage everyone to participate. Politely ask dominant participants to give others a chance and create openings for quieter members to speak.
- Use probing questions to gain a better understanding of people's experiences and opinions. The key word here is **why**.

What can you learn about policy implementation through workshops and interviews?

Evidence gathered through discussion can help you understand why a policy or programme is not delivering its intended results. It can also help to shed light on how people experience policy implementation. So the information gathered from workshops and discussions often provides another layer to the process of analysis. For example, the results from a survey may show that 78 per cent of HIV-positive people are dissatisfied with the health services they receive at local clinics. Qualitative evidence from focus group discussions with HIV-positive teenagers for instance, could then help you to gain a deeper sense of what drives their dissatisfaction, how they cope with failures in the health system and how they would like to see it changing in future.

Unlike coded information and budget data, it is not so easy to set out exact methods for analysing qualitative evidence. There is no prescribed way to interpret people's views and stories. The best way to decide how to analyse qualitative policy information is to consider what you want to lift out and highlight for the attention of powerful stakeholders. To present a compelling case, it is often important to draw attention to:

- **general patterns** that keep emerging, and seem to be typical of the way a policy is being implemented or experienced
- **systemic problems** that undermine policy progress and seem to be deeply rooted in the way a policy or programme functions in practice.



TOOL 26: ANALYSING INFORMATION FROM INTERVIEWS AND WORKSHOPS

Aim: To extract information and insights about policy implementation from the records of interviews, workshops and other discussions.

Context: This tool can be used individually or with a group.

How to use this tool

Step 1: Read through the records of what was said during the workshops or discussions you are hoping to analyse.

Step 2: Working on your own or as a group, ask the following ten questions to detect patterns in what people said in relation to the policy:

1. Who generally has access to the benefits of this policy and who does not?
2. Who is most often excluded or marginalised?
3. Which government officials or service providers have the most power to make a difference?
4. Who seems to benefit when this policy is not working as it should?
5. What are the prime obstacles to real improvements to people's lives?
6. Who has responsibility for, or control over, these obstacles?
7. How do different stakeholders cope with weaknesses and failures in this policy or programme?
8. What resources or assets do people need in order to cope with, or make up for, the failures in this policy or programme?
9. Who has power over these resources and assets?
10. What keeps these patterns in place?

Step 3: Write a summary to explain and substantiate the patterns emerging from your analysis above. For example, imagine you have reviewed the proceedings of several focus group discussions about problems with the delivery of health services. You noted that in all of these, clinic managers complained about friction they were experiencing with nursing staff. In your summary, record the trend that you noticed and then back it up with information from the workshop records. For example:

In six out of eight districts, clinic managers noted that they were experiencing conflict with nursing staff. The conflict appeared to stem from inconsistencies around the prescribed working hours for nurses. The nurses who took part in focus group discussions in R and T districts said that clinic managers did not provide them with the medical provisions needed to care for patients....etc, etc

Step 4: Don't forget to put your evidence into context. Prepare an introduction to your summary that gives some background information on where the evidence comes from and how it was gathered. For example:

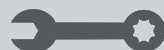
Step 5: If appropriate, select a few quotes that give expression to peoples' real perspectives and experiences of a policy. But beware of simply using quotes to 'spruce up' quantitative findings. Instead, use insights from workshops and discussions to mark out patterns and explain trends emerging from all your evidence.

Child labour was discussed at length with focus groups in X, Y and Z communities. Children and parents took part in separate discussions, to encourage freedom of expression. Views were gathered from 140 children in total. Looking at the responses of the children across all three communities, the following reasons were given for the continued practice of child labour...

Exploring the root causes of policy failures

Evidence flowing from workshops, discussions and observation may also help you to discover why a policy or programme is not working as it should. For example, imagine that it is clear from both survey and workshop evidence that people are unhappy with a certain job creation programme. Using TOOL 27 below and the evidence at your disposal, can you uncover layers of causes contributing to this situation? The deeper you go, the more likely you are to identify **systemic problems**: these are the root causes that are the most entrenched, pervasive, difficult and essential to change. To begin unravelling root causes and systemic problems, it is useful to identify:

- what factors may be working together to make the policy a success or failure
- weaknesses in the policy or programme that may be fuelled and made worse by other factors
- positive aspects of the policy that are undermined, minimised or cancelled out by other factors
- bottlenecks and blocks that prevent the policy from functioning effectively
- how and why these bottlenecks and blocks are protected and kept in place
- the underlying interests, traditions, arrangements, behaviour patterns, structures or practices that prevent the system from changing.



TOOL 27: ASKING WHY

Aim: To uncover the reasons why a policy is not producing the desired outputs or outcomes.

Context: This is a useful tool for trying to identify the root causes of a problem. It can be used individually or with a group.

How to use this tool

Step 1: Begin by asking the most obvious question you can think of about the outputs or outcomes of a policy. Taking the example of the job-creation programme discussed above, this question might be: *Why are people unhappy with this programme?*

Step 2: Use available evidence from workshops, discussions, observation, interviews or other sources to answer the questions as accurately as you can. For example, the process of asking questions about the job-creation programme could unfold as follows:

Q Why are people unhappy with the job creation programme?

A They said that they couldn't find jobs after participating in the programme for six weeks.

Q Why couldn't they find jobs after participating for six weeks?

A The programme didn't provide them with the skills that are needed in the workplace.

Q But why did the programme not focus on skills that are needed in the workplace?

A Well, it was initially meant to be a six-month course, but it only ran for the first six weeks. They were going to cover other skills areas in the weeks to follow.

Q But why did the programme only run for six weeks, if it was meant to run for six months?

A The district labour office ran out of funding for the programme.

Q Why did the district labour office run out of funding?

A The financial officer submitted a budget that was too small.

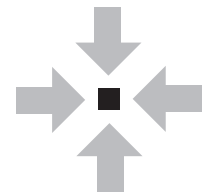
Q Why... etc

Step 3: Keep asking questions until you reach one that you can't answer with available information. You will probably need to gather more evidence before you can dig any deeper. But you should have a clear idea of exactly what kind of evidence you need.

Source: This tool is adapted from Graham Gordon, *Practical Action in Advocacy*, Tearfund (Teddington, 2002). Available at http://tilz.tearfund.org/webdocs/Tilz/Roots/English/Advocacy%20toolkit/Advocacy%20toolkit_E_FULL%20DOC_Part%20C.pdf

Note: This tool could also be used to ask questions about the success of a policy. In this instance, it should help you to uncover what best practices or critical elements have aided the policy to deliver good outputs and outcomes.

interaction



ACTIVITY 1: CHOOSING METHODS

Outcome: Participants have reviewed different methods for gathering and analysing evidence about a policy and selected those most suited to their circumstances.

Step 1: Use the information in Chapter 6 to discuss various ways of gathering and analysing evidence. If appropriate, ask participants to read up on the different methods, and present what they have learnt to the group.

Step 2: Working as a group, draw a table like the one below. In the left-hand column, list all the methods that could be used to gather and analyse evidence about the policy you have chosen to monitor (you could include relevant methods from this chapter and any others you have found out about):

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages
Interview with...		
Focus group discussion with...		
Observation of...		
Citizen report card survey on...		
Public expenditure tracking survey on....		

Step 3: Discuss and fill in the advantages and challenges of each method in relation to your specific monitoring project. Consider the following questions:

- Do you have the skills to use this method and/or can you access the right skills?
- Do you have the capacity and/or time to undertake research on this scale?

Step 4: Refer back to your detailed monitoring objectives, the types of evidence you need and the indicators you decided to track in relation to the policy (see Chapter 4). Discuss which methods are best suited to gathering evidence in relation to each of your indicators.

Step 5: Reach consensus and clearly set out the methods you will use to gather and analyse evidence. Cross-check that this will allow you to meet your monitoring objectives.

ACTIVITY 2: DESIGNING THE PROCESS

Outcome: Participants have discussed the monitoring process and reached agreement about timing, instruments and how they will work.

Step 1: Ask participants to work in small groups. Explain that their next task is to plan the monitoring process in more detail.

Step 2: Invite participants to discuss the following questions in their small groups:

- When do you think your policy monitoring process should begin and end? Even if you are not sure, put some possible dates down: this will help you to be more specific in your planning.
- What needs to be done before the process can be set in motion? What instruments do you need to create – such as survey questionnaires, workshop programmes, training materials – before you can start gathering evidence? Make a list of these ‘first steps’ that need to be taken and who you think should be responsible.
- Who will participate in gathering and analysing evidence during your policy monitoring process? Make a list of the ‘events’ – such as small meetings, workshops or public gatherings – that you foresee taking place during the monitoring process.

These pages offer some suggestions for facilitating a group discussion on the main themes raised in this chapter.

PLANNING HOW TO GATHER & ANALYSE EVIDENCE

1. Choosing methods
2. Designing the process
3. Action planning



dig deeper

Find out more about the strengths and weaknesses of different methods from www.chronicpoverty.org/CPToolbox/Strengths_weaknesses1.htm

interaction

Step 3: Invite the groups to report back on their discussions and to present their proposals regarding **time-frames, instruments** and **events**. Facilitate discussion to reach consensus on these three issues.

Step 4: Now working together as one group (or again in small groups if there are too many participants), draw a flow chart of the policy monitoring process. The beginning and end of the process should be the same as the graphic below. But what goes into the space in between, is up to them to decide:



ACTIVITY 3: ACTION PLANNING

Outcome: Participants have made a detailed breakdown of the actions they need to undertake to gather and analyse evidence about a policy.

Step 1: Invite the participants to take a good look at their flow chart and to make a detailed list of all the project activities implicit in the process.

Step 2: Draw up a table like the one below. Enter all the project activities in the left-hand column, being as specific as possible. For example:

Project activities	Who is responsible?	Date to be completed
1. Set up indicator workshop a) Identify workshop participants b) Send out invitation c) Draw up programme d) Confirm venue		
2. Host indicator workshop		
3. Identify districts to form part of the sample a) Visit CSO to explore data availability b) Visit districts to meet with local CBOs c) etc		
4. Define the survey sample in each district a) Meet with statistician at UPS b) etc		
5. Develop a training programme for field monitors a) etc b) etc		
6. etc		

Step 3: In the other two columns, ask participants to fill in responsible stakeholders' names and preliminary deadlines for each activity.

Step 4: Participants may choose to refine and fine-tune the activity schedule before adopting or otherwise ratifying it in some formal way as an organisation or network.

RECAP



Chapter 6: Gathering evidence on policy implementation

By now you should have:

- ☑ decided what methods you will use to gather and analyse evidence about a policy
- ☑ identified the monitoring instruments you will need
- ☑ set plans in place to guide and coordinate your policy monitoring process.

Once you have gathered and analysed the evidence, the next steps are to:

- ➔ generate recommendations for change
- ➔ develop an advocacy message and strategy

The **conclusion** will help you to start planning for advocacy.

USING POLICY EVIDENCE TO **ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE**

This chapter aims to help you use the evidence you have gathered to bring about change. As made clear in the introduction, this toolkit is not a guide to advocacy work. Many useful resources already exist that can help you to plan your advocacy strategy in detail (see the resource list at the end of the toolkit for some ideas. It will, however, explore the following questions:

- How can evidence about a policy be used to inform the direction of future policy?
- What is an advocacy message and how can you put it across?

The conclusion presents the following tool:

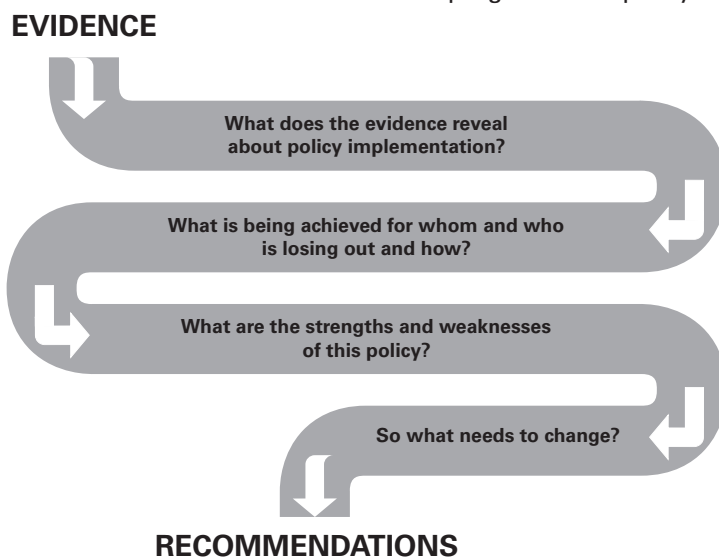
TOOL 28: FIRST AID AND LONGER-TERM REMEDIES

The interaction pages provide ideas and activities to help you start planning your advocacy and to consolidate your approach to policy monitoring. They will help you to:

- plan how you will present your evidence and recommendations, and
- consolidate your plans for policy monitoring in your own context.

Making recommendations for policy change

The reason for monitoring policies is to advocate for positive changes based on your evidence. Hopefully, the evidence you have gathered provides you with ample fuel for your advocacy work. It should allow you to draw conclusions about a government’s present course of action and make suggestions about what needs to change. These are the recommendations you will make to powerful stakeholders to influence the future direction of a programme or policy:



Even the most reliable evidence is powerless unless it is translated into a convincing and clear message for advocacy. TOOL 28 can help you to review your evidence to develop a concise set of recommendations for policy change.

Who should generate policy recommendations?

Like many aspects of policy monitoring, formulating recommendations can be done with more or less participation. In most instances it is useful to get different stakeholders involved. This will also help you to understand the implications of your evidence from more points of view. You could, for example:

- facilitate a meeting of multiple stakeholders to discuss the evidence and decide which proposals to put forward
- have separate focus group discussions with different stakeholder groupings and draw together the recommendations flowing from each
- ask those involved in policy implementation to help formulate recommendations – for example, front-end service providers may offer useful insight when it comes to making practical policy suggestions
- invite organisations or individuals with expertise in the policy area to consider the evidence and generate recommendations on specific challenges or obstacles
- create a small but diverse team within your organisation or network to take the lead in formulating recommendations, and then review and refine these with a broader range of stakeholders.



TOOL 28: FIRST AID AND LONGER-TERM REMEDIES

Aim: To examine evidence about a policy and formulate immediate and longer-term recommendations on how to change the policy itself and/or its implementation.

Context: This tool can be used individually or with a group. It can be applied to evidence gathered by the group itself or to evidence gathered by others.

How to use this tool

Step 1: Review the evidence on policy implementation. Use the information to make a comprehensive list of problems, relating to the programme or policy you are monitoring.

Step 2: Consider which of these problems may be relatively easy to address. Identify which problems are more systemic and will call for more demanding, longer-term solutions. If possible, write each problem on a separate card and arrange them along a continuum like the one below:



Step 3: In relation to each problem, consider what actions you think government could or should take to resolve the situation – or to move in the direction of finding a solution.

Step 4: Formulate these suggested actions as recommendations. You can use a table like the one below to help you differentiate between:

- **immediate or first-aid remedies** – steps that should be taken now to ameliorate the worst affects of a policy or programme
- **longer-term remedies** – the systemic changes that are required to address the root causes of poor or inadequate policy outcomes.

Attach time-frames to the longer-term remedies. This will indicate when you think the actions should have been taken.

Step 5: Make sure all your recommendations are clear, reasonable, viable and affordable.

Example: Recommendations relating to a feeding programme in a school

Problem	First-aid remedy	Longer-term remedy
The programme is not reaching the most vulnerable children	Improve targeting	Develop a reliable system to gather data on numbers and distribution of vulnerable children across schools and districts
Meals are not delivered regularly in districts A and B	Investigate and review contracts with service providers	Improve the management of contracts with external service providers and set early warning system in place
The nutritional quality of meals in districts X and Y is inadequate	Create norms and standards prescribing nutritional requirements; review content of meals and improve their nutritional quality	Create a monitoring system to ensure that all meals consistently meet nutritional requirements
Etc		

Planning for advocacy


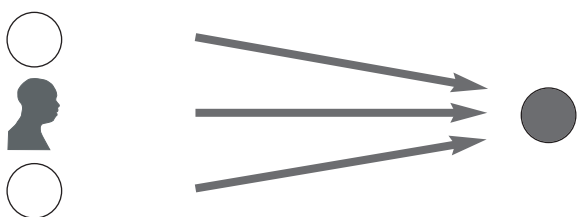



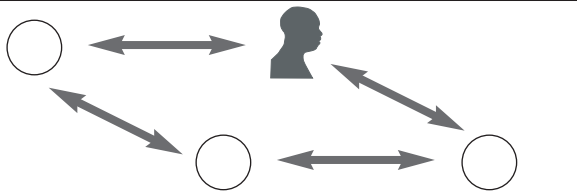
NGOs, interest groups, activists and even policy-makers themselves advocate to call for the creation of new policies or to reform existing ones, to make policy implementation more effective or to see that policies are enforced as planned.

Source: Thanks to Daan van Bree of *Action for Development* in Ethiopia for this information on advocacy.

Once you have gathered and analysed evidence about a policy – and formulated recommendations – the next step is to present these findings to powerful stakeholders. Here are some different roles that can be adopted during advocacy.

The roles of an advocate

The word advocacy comes from the Latin *ad vocare*, which means to speak for someone. The chart below illustrates some of the different meanings attached to this role:

ROLE	CHARACTERISTIC	
Represent	To speak on behalf of people	
Accompany	To speak with (alongside) people	
Empower	To enable people to speak for themselves	
Mediate	To facilitate communication between people	
Negotiate	To bargain for something	
Network	To build coalitions	

Examples of advocacy strategies

- Pressurising decision makers to change policies, laws, programmes or budget allocations
- Mobilising people to demand changes in policies and resource allocations
- Raising awareness and reporting abuses of power and violations of human rights
- Establishing and monitoring standards, rules and procedures – and creating systems of incentives and sanctions to enforce them
- Tracking the quality of government services
- Establishing and supporting human rights watchdog organisations and functions
- Educating the public and decision-makers about human rights and policy issues
- Using the legal system to claim entitlements and to achieve justice and equality



dig deeper

Learn more about advocacy and access more tools from:

- Graham Gordon, *Practical Action in Advocacy*, Tearfund (Teddington, 2002) – available at http://tilz.tearfund.org/webdocs/Tilz/Roots/English/Advocacy%20toolkit/Advocacy%20toolkit_E_FULL%20DOC_Part%20C.pdf
- CARE, *Advocacy tools and guideline: promoting policy change* – available at www.care.org/getinvolved/advocacy/tools.asp
- OXFAM Canada's Advocacy Toolkit, available at <http://act.oxfam.ca/act/volunteertoolkit>
- Christian Relief and Development Association Training Centre, *Materials for Training Programme on Advocacy and Policy Influencing*, CRDA (Ethiopia, undated)
- Guidelines on assessing the impact of your advocacy, available at www.cimrc.info/pdf/news/Impactassess.pdf

Different forms of engagement

Chapter 3 provides ideas and tools for identifying the target audiences of your advocacy work. These may include stakeholders you want to:

- inform with your evidence and mobilise to support your advocacy message
- influence with your evidence and recommendations, so they instigate policy changes.

There are many ways to engage and communicate with those you have identified as the target audience(s) of your policy monitoring work. Here are just a few examples:

- **Private meetings** with powerful stakeholders can sometimes allow for more substantial interaction than would be possible in public settings.
- **Public meetings** are useful means to encourage broad debate and discussion.
- **Requesting an audience** with members of parliament gives you an opportunity to present what you have learnt about policy implementation.
- **Seminars, workshops and conferences** can be used to share information with other stakeholders and discuss your findings and recommendations.
- **Marches, petitions and other forms of peaceful protest** can be an effective way to add pressure to your message and raise your media profile.
- **Media briefings** and the preparation of media kits are valuable means to engage the interest of journalists and editors and encourage them to report on your findings.
- **Public awareness campaigns** can play an essential role in informing people about the evidence you have gathered and mobilising action to call for change.

How to put your message across

It is essential to consider **when** you have the best chance of influencing decision-makers with your evidence. For example, if you want to influence budget allocations to a specific programme, you will need to get your message across at a particular time in the budget process.

You will also need to decide in what format(s) you will communicate your evidence and recommendations. For example, you might decide to produce presentation slides, hand-outs, pamphlets, brochures, easy-to-read guides, comics, newspaper or magazine articles, books, formal submissions and/or reports. Some materials take longer to prepare than others, and this should be factored into your planning.



case study

Popular resources to support advocacy in Tanzania

Hakikazi Catalyst in Tanzania is an advocacy organisation committed to economic and social justice. It spreads knowledge about important policies to as many people as possible to stimulate action for change. Hakikazi is well known for its pioneering use of plain-language guides. It has produced various guides on the Tanzanian PRSP, including an easy-to-read report on implementation progress. It has also published guides on the Millennium Development Goals, land, forest and wildlife policies, agricultural policies, enterprise and trade policy.

These guides encourage people to learn about, and engage with, the policies that affect their lives. Hakikazi takes special care to cater for those who are usually excluded from policy debates. The guides are carefully written to avoid jargon and often make use of cartoons to get their message across.

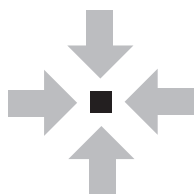


Source: Find out more about Hakikazi and access their guides at www.hakikazi.org/plain_language.htm

Tips for designing effective messages

- Know your audience
- Know your political environment and moment
- Keep your message simple and brief
- Use everyday words and images
- Use real-life, human stories
- Emphasise positive values: what are you calling for?
- Use clear facts and numbers creatively: avoid over-using statistics and jargon
- Use precise, powerful language and active verbs
- Deliver a consistent message through a variety of channels over an extended period of time. Repetition is vital: deliver the same message in different ways
- Deliver your message through a source your audience finds credible. The messenger may be as important as the message itself
- Present the message in a way the audience will understand. The issue needs to be specifically aimed at the target group. This does not require any compromise on core values
- You may need to simplify the message to reach a broad public audience. At the same time, your message should be substantial enough to convince decision-makers
- Anticipate your target audiences' likely objections and how to counter them. Produce a checklist of their likely arguments and your answers
- Present a solution and encourage your audience to take action to achieve it
- Practise presenting the message to other people to make sure they understand it

Source: Christian Relief and Development Association Training Centre, *Materials for Training Programme on Advocacy and Policy Influencing* CRDA (Ethiopia, undated)



interaction

These pages offer some suggestions for facilitating a group discussion on the main themes raised in this chapter:

STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE

1. Groundwork for advocacy
2. Consolidating our policy monitoring approach

ACTIVITY 1: GROUNDWORK FOR ADVOCACY

Outcome: Participants have taken the first steps in planning their advocacy approach and know what further planning is required.

Step 1: Invite the participants to imagine what would happen if they were 100 per cent successful in advocating for improvements or changes in relation to a policy. Working in pairs or small groups, ask them to list and describe, in detail, what would tell them that their advocacy efforts had paid off.

Step 2: Ask each pair or small group to report back on their discussion. Based on these, make a shared list of signs that would mean your advocacy strategy was working.

Step 3: Now knowing what you hope to achieve, re-establish who the target audiences are that you need to influence with your evidence (see chapter 3). Use TOOL 28, if appropriate, to decide what recommendations you would like to communicate to them.

Step 4: Look at the different forms of engagement listed on page 96. If necessary, decide how you will learn more about different advocacy methods. Reach consensus on the following questions:

- Which forms of engagement will you use to present and discuss your evidence and recommendations?
- What kinds of materials will you produce to communicate with your target audience(s)?
- How much time and other resources can you devote to preparing these materials? Be sure to choose outputs that can be produced well and on time.

Step 5: Draw up a timetable like the one below about your strategies for communicating with stakeholders, specifying exact dates wherever possible.

Date	Target audience	Forms of engagement	Desired outcomes
18 Aug	Parliamentary committee on health	Formal presentation	Members of Parliament take a harder line with Minister of Health at budget vote
12 Sept	Director-general of Research: Nutrition & Food Safety	Informal meeting + leave behind report summary with graphics of findings and plain language overview	DG institutes better data-capturing immediately and is open to evidence on the efficacy of the School Nutrition programme (fills gaps she has identified herself – speech 11/06)
30 Sept	... etc	... etc	... etc

ACTIVITY 2: CONSOLIDATING YOUR POLICY MONITORING APPROACH

Outcome: Participants have consolidated their understanding of the main themes of the toolkit and drawn up a timeline for their policy monitoring work.


Step 1: Draw up a table like the one below, but leave more space in each row. Or give a page for each row to create a planning booklet.

Step 2: Start at the end by filling in a date you are aiming to have brought about the changes you want to see. Imagine it is this day. Next to the date, list all the outcomes you have achieved by then through your monitoring work.

Step 3: Move up to the row above the outcomes you hope to achieve. In the right hand column, spell out exactly what advocacy strategy you would need to adopt in order to reach the outcomes you have listed. In the 'Dates' column, specify by what date you would have to complete your advocacy work in order to achieve the outcomes you listed.

interaction

Step 4: After completing each row, move up to the row above it. Working in this way, complete the table from the bottom up, section by section.

Timeline	Dates	Policy monitoring goals
 <p>NOW</p>	By	What situation or problem have we identified that we want to impact on?
	By	Which policy or policies have we chosen to monitor?
	By	What policy documents have we collected?
	By	Which stakeholders have we identified as target audiences?
	By	What team have we built to enable our monitoring work?
	By	What have we found out about the content of this policy?
	By	What specific objectives have we set to monitor this policy?
	By	Which indicators have we chosen to track?
	By	How did we set a baseline for our monitoring process?
	By	What methods have we used to gather the kind of evidence we need?
	By	What process of analysis did we follow to generate our advocacy message?
	By	What outputs have we produced to get our advocacy message across?
	By	What advocacy strategy did we follow to achieve our outcomes?
	END TARGET	By

The time is now ripe to embark on your own journey through the policy landscape. Whenever you can, share your lessons and insights with others working against poverty. Good luck on the road ahead!

Useful resources and contacts

Advocacy for social justice: a global action and reflection guide, by David Cohen and Rosa de la Vega (2002). Oxford: OXFAM/Advocacy Institute.

Advocacy toolkit: Understanding advocacy and Practical action in advocacy, by Graham Gordon (2002). Teddington: Tearfund. ISBN 1 904364 00 4.

A new weave of power, people and politics: The action guide for advocacy and citizen participation, by Lisa VeneKlasen and Valerie Miller (2002). Oklahoma: World Neighbors. ISBN 0 942716 17 5.

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Organisations

Africa Budget Project (South Africa): www.idasa.org.za

Catholic Agency for Overseas Development: www.cafod.org.uk

Christian Aid: www.christianaid.org.uk

Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (Zambia): www.cspr.org.zm

Hakikazi Catalyst (Tanzania): www.hakikazi.org

Integrated Social Development Centre (Ghana): www.isodec.org.gh

International Budget Project www.internationalbudget.org

Malawi Economic Justice Network: www.mejn.org

Network Movement for Justice & Development (Sierra Leone): www.nmjd.org

PANE www.pane.org.et

Social Enterprise Development Foundation of West Africa (Ghana): www.sendfoundation.org

Trócaire: www.trocaire.org/

Uganda Debt Network: www.udn.or.ug

CAFOD, Christian Aid and Trócaire all provide financial and technical support to local civil society organisations in developing countries. All three agencies are committed to supporting partners working in policy, advocacy and campaigning.

This toolkit is especially designed to help African civil society organisations analyse and monitor government policy implementation. High-quality research, accompanied by strong campaigning and lobbying is a key way for local organisations to hold their governments to account.

The tools included in this document are based on a two-year participatory project, including three workshops, with partner organisations in Sierra Leone, Ethiopia and Malawi.

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